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ABSTRACT

This report provides descriptive information on charter schools that were in operation during the 1997-98 school year. The report is part of a 4-year research program that will document and analyze the charter-school movement. Data were gathered using phone surveys, repeated field visits to a sample of charter schools and their surrounding districts, student achievement tests administered at a sample of charter schools, the collection of existing student assessments for a sample of charter schools and for other public schools, and other methods. The report opens with an overview of the charter movement, paying particular attention to the differences across charter states in terms of the number of charter schools. The next section summarizes basic characteristics of charter schools compared to other public schools, and includes such data as school size, grade-level configuration, percentages of certificated teachers, and student-to-computer ratios. The third section compares student-demographic features of charter schools to that of other public schools. The last section reviews data on several issues that are central to understanding how charter schools may operate differently from other public schools. Data show that an additional 361 charter schools opened in 1998, raising the total number of charter schools to 1,050, operating in 27 states. (RJM)

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The STATE of Charter SCHOOLS

Third-Year Report

National Study of Charter Schools

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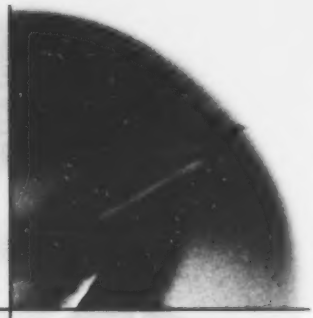

The STATE of Charter SCHOOLS

Third-Year Report

RPP INTERNATIONAL

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1999

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Tables and figures in this book that do not include source information are taken from the surveys and site visits conducted in the National Study of Charter Schools.

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While appreciating the contributions of all of the reviewers, the authors accept full responsibility for the content of the Report.

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Executive Summary

What sets charter schools apart from other public schools is their charter—a contract with a state or local agency that provides the school with public funds for a specified time. This contract frees charter schools from a number of regulations that otherwise apply to public schools. In exchange, the charter schools are accountable for improving student performance and achieving goals set out in the charter.

This Third-Year Report of the National Study of Charter Schools provides descriptive information on charter schools that were operating in the 1997–98 school year. Subsequent reports of the National Study will address broad policy issues concerning the charter school movement and its potential effects on America's system of public education.

Growth Trends: The charter movement continued to expand in 1998

- An additional 361 charter schools opened in 1998, bringing the total to 1,050 charter schools in operation in 27 states plus the District of Columbia. Including multiple branches of a school operating under the same charter, the total number of charter school sites operating was 1,129 as of September 1998.
- The demand for charter schools remains high—7 of 10 report that they have a waiting list.
- Thirteen charter schools closed in 1997–98. In total, 32 charter schools—which is about 3 percent of all charter schools—have closed since the first charter school opened in 1992.
- The number of students in charter schools increased in 1997–98 by about 50,000, bringing the total to about 160,000 students. This total represents only 0.6 percent of all public school students in the 23 charter states plus the District of Columbia that had open charter schools as of June, 1998.
- During the 1998 legislative session, 4 new states—Idaho, Missouri, Virginia, and Utah—passed charter legislation, bringing the total to 33 states and the District of Columbia.[1] Several charter states amended their laws—two increased the number of charters that can be granted; two expanded the number of agencies allowed to grant charters; one that previously only allowed pre-existing public schools authorized newly created charter schools; two authorized funds for capital improvement needs of charter schools; and 1 state increased the length of the charter term.

Characteristics of Charter Schools: Most charter schools are newly created, small schools. The charter schools that opened during 1997–98 were more likely to be newly-created, small schools than charter schools opening in prior years.

- Even more so than in the past, recently opened charter schools are small. Currently, the median enrollment of all charter schools is about 132 students per school, whereas all public schools in the charter states have a median of about 486 students. The median size reported in the Second-Year Report was about 149 students per charter school.
- Many charter schools have atypical grade configurations. For 1997–98, 1 of 4 charter schools spanned K–12, K–8, or were ungraded compared to fewer than 1 in 10 with similar configurations for all public schools.
- Seven of 10 charter schools are now newly created schools, compared to 6 of 10 for 1996–97. These schools are smaller, on average, than converted pre-existing public schools. Nine of the 33 states with charter laws allow private schools to convert to charter schools. Private school conversions represent 11 percent of all charter schools.

[1] New York enacted charter legislation in December 1998.

- Most charter school teachers are certificated, but in those states that allow noncertificated teachers charter schools have a somewhat lower percentage of certificated teachers than charter schools in other states.
- About 2 of 3 charter schools of a subsample of charter schools had a student to computer ratio of fewer than 10 students per computer. The National Study estimates a median ratio for all charter schools of six to one.

Students of Charter Schools: Nationwide, students in charter schools have similar demographic characteristics to students in all public schools. However, charter schools in some states serve significantly higher percentages of minority or economically disadvantaged students.

- Our data contain no evidence that charter schools disproportionately serve white and economically advantaged students.
- White students made up about 52 percent of charter school enrollment and about 58 percent of public school enrollment in 1997–98. These figures are the same as in 1996–97.
- Charter schools in several states—Connecticut, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, North Carolina, and Texas—serve a much higher percentage of students of color than all public schools in those states.
- Seven of 10 schools have a student racial/ethnic composition that was similar to its surrounding districts. About 16 percent of charter schools serve a higher percentage of students of color than their surrounding districts.
- The estimated percentage of LEP students in charter schools is 10.1 percent, which is a slight drop from the 12.7 percent reported for 1996–97. The comparable figure for all public schools in the 23 charter states and the District of Columbia is approximately 10.7 percent.
- Without regard to differences across states, the reported percentage of students with disabilities at charter schools is 8 percent, which is somewhat less than the 11 percent for all public schools in these states.

The Founding of Charter Schools: Most charter schools aim to realize an alternative vision of schooling.

- Nearly 7 of 10 newly created charter schools seek to realize an alternative vision of schooling, and an additional 2 of 10 were founded especially to serve a special target population of students. Four of 10 public schools report that they converted to charter status in order to gain autonomy from district and state regulations.
- Many private schools that converted to charter status sought public funds so that they could stabilize their finances and attract students.

Challenges Implementing Charter Schools: Practically all charter schools have had to overcome obstacles during their development.

- Most charter schools continue to cite resource limitations as a serious implementation difficulty.
- Newly created charter schools were more likely to cite resource limitations as a major difficulty than pre-existing charter schools.
- About 3 of 10 charter schools that were formerly public schools reported that state or local board opposition or regulations presented obstacles to their school's implementation. About one in five schools that were formerly public indicated that they had difficulty with teacher unions or collective bargaining agreements.

Autonomy and Accountability: Charter schools, particularly newly created ones, have considerable autonomy. They provide standard financial and student achievement reports to different constituencies depending on the state's approach to accountability.

- The majority of charter schools felt they had primary control over most areas critical to school operations. Fewer charter schools felt they had control over student admissions, budget, student assessment, and school calendar. Compared to newly created charter schools, a lower proportion of pre-existing public schools said they had primary control.
- Most charter schools provide one or more non-instructional services (e.g., health services, social services, and before and after schools care). Three of 10 newly created charter schools that provided services chose to provide services themselves, with the remainder provided by districts and other outside providers. In contrast, about 6 of 10 pre-existing charter schools rely on districts. Pre-existing private schools were equally likely to provide services themselves and use an outside provider.
- Nearly 9 of 10 charter schools were monitored for accountability in terms of financial accounts; 7 of 10 for student achievement and for student attendance; and 6 of 10 for compliance with regulations and instructional practices.
- The states differ greatly in how they approach accountability, with some following a "centralized" state agency approach, others a "market" driven approach, and still others a "district-based" approach that relies on local accountability within a framework of state testing.
- More than 80 percent of charter schools (based on a subsample of schools) said they made reports during the 1997–98 school year for accountability purposes to one or more constituencies, including their chartering agency, school governing board, state Department of Education, parents, the community, or private funders.
- Almost 90 percent of charter schools (based on a subsample of schools) used student achievement tests, augmented by other measures of student performance and school success to make reports to their chartering agency, the schools governing board, and/or parents.

About This Report

The National Study of Charter Schools (the Study) is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education as authorized by the 1994 Amendments to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The Study is a 4-year research program to document and analyze the charter school movement.

The Study's Focus. The Study addresses three major research questions:

- How have charter schools been implemented?
- Under what conditions, if any, have they improved student achievement?
- What impact have they had on public education?

Drawing from research evidence, the Study also asks broad policy questions:

- What models of education have charter schools developed that can be used by other public schools?
- What lessons can be learned from the charter school experience for public education, and what implications should be drawn for state and national policy?
- How might charter schools evolve in the coming decade?

The Study's Research Approach. The Study's research consists of (1) annual phone surveys of all charter schools; (2) repeated field visits to a sample of charter schools and their surrounding districts; (3) the administration of student achievement tests over time at a sample of charter schools; (4) the collection of existing student assessments for a sample of charter schools and for other public schools at district and state levels; (5) analyzes across states of charter laws, state agency rulings and procedures, court rulings, and education policy; and (6) case studies of how charter school policies and local practices have worked and affected public education in five states.

This Report, the third annual report from the Study, presents interim findings that focus on describing how charter schools are being implemented. Subsequent reports will address all of the questions listed above. This Report in particular provides concise summaries of data that describe selected characteristics of charter schools in comparison, wherever possible, to other public schools.

The Report's Organization. Section A begins with an overview of the charter movement. It describes the growth of charter schools, with particular attention paid to the differences across the charter states in terms of the number of charter schools and when they became operational. Since charter school legislation is unique to each state, we summarize key characteristics of the charter laws by state.

Section B summarizes basic characteristics of charter schools compared to other public schools. The characteristics covered in this Report are school size, grade level configuration, percentages of certificated teachers, and student to computer ratio.

Section C focuses on student demographic features of charter schools compared to other public schools. This Report briefly describes the racial/ethnic composition of the schools, and the percentages of students that are low income, have disabilities, or have limited proficiency in English.

Section D reviews data on several issues that are central to understanding how charter schools may operate differently from other public schools. These issues include the reasons why charter schools were started, challenges they have encountered during implementation, the autonomy they have for making critical decisions, and the way in which they may be held accountable.

The Report's Data. The findings presented in this Report rely on three waves of telephone surveys to all cooperating charter schools that were open to children during the 1997–98 school year, visits to 91 field sites across the country, and extensive analysis of state charter laws.

In the first year of a school's involvement in the study, a school administrator was asked to respond to a new charter school telephone survey. In each subsequent year, they were asked to respond to a follow-up telephone survey. For the first wave of data collection (Spring 1996), 252 charter schools had opened prior to or during the 1995–96 school year. These schools were asked to respond to the new school survey in 1996 and follow-up surveys in 1997 and 1998. For the second wave of data collection (Spring 1997), 178 additional charter schools had opened and were asked to respond to the new school survey in 1997 and the follow-up survey in 1988. For the third wave of data collection (Spring 1998), 284 additional charter schools had opened and were asked to respond to the new school survey in 1998. Response rates for surveys ranged from 78 to 91 percent.

In general, this Report relies on the most recent information available but also draws from a range of years (1996–98). Where possible, 1998 data are used. If we did not have data from a 1998 survey, the information is taken from previous surveys, either the 1997 or the 1996 surveys.

In some cases we asked for information only on selected surveys. When we report on data gathered only on a selected survey, we refer to a subsample of schools. Responses for questions asked only on the 1998 follow-up survey represent 79 percent of available charter schools (294 schools of a possible 373 responded). Responses for questions asked on both the 1997 and 1998 follow-up surveys represent 87 percent of available charter schools (326 schools of a possible 373 responded). Responses for questions asked either on the 1997 new school survey or on a follow-up survey represent 97 percent of available charter schools (361 schools of a possible 373 responded).

It should be noted that for tables that present data by state, we have omitted states with three or fewer charter schools open to protect school confidentiality. In addition, data from states that have fewer than 10 charter schools may not be meaningful. It is also the case that some individual school data may be incomplete if specific survey items were not answered. All figures and tables report the total number of responses on which the findings are based.

For some tables, data other than the telephone survey were gathered. To estimate charter school enrollment, we supplemented our telephone survey data with information from other sources. We drew on state sources in Alaska, Arizona, California, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New Mexico, and Pennsylvania to include 1997–98 enrollment data for 59 missing schools in those states. Where information was still unavailable for schools in those states, and in Georgia and Texas, we were able to use enrollment information from the 1996–97 Common Core of Data Survey, Early Release Files, published by the National Center for Education Statistics. The number of charter schools represented by these data is 678, which is 94 percent of our estimate of the 717 charter schools in operation during 1997–98.

Some tables in this Report provide comparison information about all public schools in the 24 states with operating charter schools.[1] [For the purposes of the remainder of this Report, we refer to the District of Columbia as a "state."] Public school data come from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data Survey 1996–97 Early Release Files. These data refer to all public schools (including charter schools) in the 24 charter states. For public school information on racial demographics, 789 schools or 1.6 percent of all public schools reported racial information that was considered invalid because it did not match the total enrollment information, data is calculated on the basis of 49,316 public schools. In all cases we drew on the best comparative data available.

NUMBER OF CHARTER SCHOOLS IN THE NATIONAL TELEPHONE SURVEY

	# schools for new charter school survey			# schools for first follow-up survey			# schools for second follow-up survey		
	YEAR	ASKED	ANSWERED	YEAR	ASKED	ANSWERED	YEAR	ASKED	ANSWERED
Schools opened prior to or during the 1995–1996 school year	1996	252	230	1997	228	178	1998	224	175
Additional schools opened as of the 1996–1997 school year	1997	178	153	1998	149	118	X	X	X
Additional schools opened as of the 1997–1998 school year	1998	284	246	X	X	X	X	X	X
Total as of September, 1998		717	629		377	296			175

[1] This definition excludes from the Study some charter-like schools. We have opted to exclude single state-sponsored specialty schools (e.g., state schools for the arts, or schools for low-incidence special education students) even if they operate pursuant to the terms of a state-granted or charter-like contract. We have also excluded some states that do not have formal charter legislation but have policies that create schools that share some charter-like characteristics (Oregon and Puerto Rico).

[2] This number includes three schools that were open prior to or during the 1995–96 school year, but which were not reported as open at the time our survey was conducted. These three schools were therefore not asked to respond to the survey.

[3] This number includes 10 schools that were closed as of the 1997–98 school year, 6 from the first wave of data and 4 from the second wave of data.

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A. States and Charter Schools

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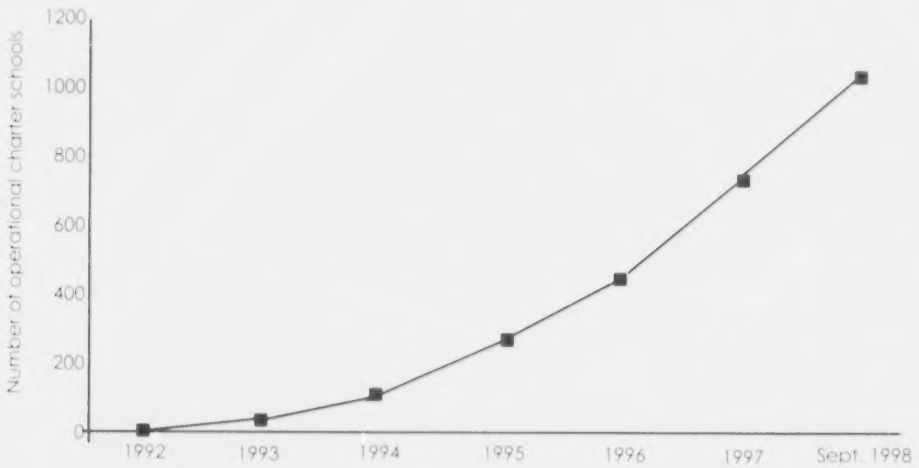
THE EXPANDING CHARTER SCHOOL MOVEMENT

Charter schools have become an accepted part of the landscape of public education in 33 of the 50 states. The 7 years since the 1991 passage of the first state's charter legislation have seen growth in both the number of states with charter legislation and in the number of charter schools opening in those states. While each state's law is unique, 34 states (including the District of Columbia) have legislation that authorizes an entity to grant charters to schools that frees them from some or all of the state's regulations in exchange for greater accountability for student outcomes.

- As of September 1998, 34 states had enacted charter school legislation. The greatest increase in the number of states with charter legislation was seen in 1996, with 8 states passing legislation in that year.
- Four states—Idaho, Missouri, Virginia, and Utah—enacted charter school legislation in the 1998 legislative session. Idaho's first two charter schools opened in September 1998, while the first charter schools in Missouri, Virginia, and Utah are projected to open in the fall of 1999.
- Twenty-eight states had operating charter schools as of September 1998. Although Arkansas, New Hampshire, and Wyoming passed charter legislation during the 1995 legislative session, no charter schools had opened in those states as of September 1998.
- Since the first charter schools opened in 1992, the number of charter schools has grown rapidly with 361 new charter schools opening in September 1998. Demand for charter schools remains high; 70 percent of the charter schools reported having a waiting list.
- As of September 1998, the total number of charter schools in operation was approximately 1,050; if multiple branches of Arizona schools operating under one charter were included, the total would be approximately 1,129.
- Charter schools are not distributed equally across states; 44 percent (457 schools) of charter schools are located in 3 states: California, Michigan, and Arizona. On the other hand, 12 states have 15 or fewer charter schools.
- By the beginning of the 1998–99 school year, 32 charter schools had closed. This represents about 3 percent of the charter schools that had opened since 1992.

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF OPERATIONAL CHARTER SCHOOLS BY YEAR



STATES WITH CHARTER LEGISLATION, BY YEAR, PASSED AS OF SEPTEMBER 1998

1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998[1]
Minnesota	California	Colorado Georgia Massachusetts Michigan New Mexico Wisconsin	Arizona Hawaii Kansas	Alaska Arkansas Delaware New Hampshire Louisiana Rhode Island Wyoming	Connecticut District of Col. Florida Illinois New Jersey North Carolina South Carolina Texas	Mississippi Nevada Ohio Pennsylvania	Idaho Missouri Virginia Utah

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF CHARTER SCHOOLS IN OPERATION AS OF SEPTEMBER 1998, BY STATE

	Number of charter schools starting in the year closed as of						Total schools operating September 1998	New schools September 1998	Total schools September 1998
	1992–93	1993–94	1994–95	1995–96	1996–97	1997–98			
Total	2	34	64	154	178	289	32	361	1,050
Minnesota	2	5	7	3	3	8	2	12	38
California		28	36	30	21	19	6	17	145
Colorado		1	13	10	8	19	1	10	60
Michigan			2	41	33	36	4	24	132
New Mexico			4	0	1	0	0	0	5
Wisconsin			2	3	6	7	0	12	30
Arizona				47	58	45	14	44	180
Georgia				3	9	9	1	7	27
Hawaii				2	0	0	0	0	2
Massachusetts				15	7	3	1	10	34
Alaska					2	13	0	2	17
Delaware					2	1	0	1	4
District of Columbia					2	1	1	16	18
Florida					5	28	1	38	70
Illinois					1	7	0	6	14
Louisiana					3	3	0	4	10
Texas					17	21	0	49	87
Connecticut						12	0	4	16
Kansas						1	0	14	15
New Jersey						13	0	17	30
North Carolina						34	1	26	59
Pennsylvania						6	0	25	31
Rhode Island						1	0	1	2
South Carolina						2	0	3	5
Idaho								2	2
Mississippi								1	1
Nevada								1	1
Ohio								15	15

NOTE: The Study reports the number of charters given to individual entities, though some of these charters may use space within another school or be connected to another school by some other arrangement. The number of charters listed above does not include the total number of school sites operating under a charter. Some charters, particularly in Arizona, run similar programs in several sites around the state. In those cases, the Study only counts the charter once. Several charters in California were awarded to districts or complexes of schools. Since each school within the group was previously a separate school, the Study counts each school as a separate charter school. Taking into account multiple school sites operating under one charter, the Study estimates that the total number of school sites operating under charters was 1,129 in September 1998.

[1] New York enacted charter legislation in December 1998 as this Report was going to press.
[2] The column "Total Schools Closed as of September 1998" reflects the cumulative number of charter schools closed since 1992.
[3] The number of schools that opened in the 1997–98 school year is slightly different for some states than the number of schools reported last year as of September 1997. The 1997–98 column includes several schools that opened later in the 1997–98 school year.

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STATE CHARTER LEGISLATION

State authorizing legislation for charter schools establishes the state's charter school context; charter legislation differs dramatically from state to state. In many ways, the 34 states with legislation represent 34 different approaches to charter schools. Charter laws are not static—during the 1998 legislative session, six states made significant changes in their laws. Charter laws differ on a number of characteristics; some of the key characteristics are highlighted here.

- *Who can grant charters:* State laws differ on the number and types of agencies that are allowed to grant charters and whether potential charter schools can appeal those decisions. In 15 states, only local boards can grant charters. Local boards are the final authority in seven of those states (Alaska, Kansas, Louisiana, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming), while local decisions can be appealed to another entity in the other eight of those states (California, Colorado, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Montana, New Hampshire, and South Carolina). Only the State Board can grant charters in six states (Arkansas, Georgia, Hawaii, New Mexico, Rhode Island, and Utah). In New Jersey, only the State Commissioner can grant charters and in Connecticut and Nevada both the local board and state board must approve a charter. The remaining 10 states allow multiple agencies to grant charters.

- *Types of charters allowed:* Charter schools either come into existence as charter schools (newly created) or were previously either public or private schools. State charter laws differ on the types of schools allowed. All states allow the conversion of pre-existing public schools to charter status and all but three states (Arkansas, Mississippi, and New Mexico) allow newly-created charter schools. Most states prohibit the conversion of private schools to charter schools—pre-existing private schools are allowed to convert to charters in just nine states (Arizona, District of Columbia, Michigan, Minnesota, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, and Wisconsin).

- *Number of charter schools allowed:* State laws contain provisions governing the number of charter schools allowed. Sixteen of the 34 states have no statewide limit on the number of charter schools allowed. The 18 remaining states limit either the absolute number of schools, the number allowed by district, or the number allowed per year. In three states (Mississippi, New Mexico, and Utah), the statewide limit on the number of charter schools is fewer than nine schools.

- *Duration of charter term:* Charter laws require schools to renew their charter after their charter term. The length of the charter term ranges from an annual review required in Pennsylvania to 15-year charter terms in Arizona and the District of Columbia. Most other states have charter terms ranging from 3 to 5 years.

- *Collective bargaining:* Collective bargaining is allowed in all but three states with charter legislation. Of the remaining 31 states, 22 had operating charter schools in the 1997–98 school year. The table below shows the percentage of schools with teachers covered by collective bargaining agreements in each of those 22 states.

KEY DIMENSIONS OF CHARTER LEGISLATION, BY STATE

State	Who can grant charter	Charter creation status: Newly created	Charter creation status: Pre-existing public	Charter creation status: Pre-existing private	Number of charter schools allowed	Duration of charter term	Collective bargaining allowed	Collective bargaining allowed (% of schools)
Alaska	Local boards	Yes	Yes	No	30	5 years	Yes	(100%)
Arizona	Local boards, State board, and State charter board	Yes	Yes	Yes	No limit	15 years	Yes	(2%)
Arkansas	State board	No	Yes	No	No limit	3 years	Yes	
California	Local boards + appeals	Yes	Yes	No	100 annually	5 years	Yes	(57%)
Colorado	Local boards + appeals	Yes	Yes	No	No limit	5 years	Yes	(8%)
Connecticut	Both Local boards and State board	Yes	Yes	No	24	5 years	Yes	(18%)
Delaware	Local boards for conversions and State board for newly created	Yes	Yes	No	No limit	3 years	Yes	(0%)
District of Columbia	Local boards, State board, and State charter board + appeals	Yes	Yes	Yes	20 annually	15 years	Yes	(0%)
Florida	Local boards + appeals	Yes	Yes	No	Other limits	3 years	Yes	(3%)

KEY DIMENSIONS OF CHARTER LEGISLATION, BY STATE (CONTINUED)

State	Who can grant charter	Charter creation status: Newly created	Charter creation status: Pre-existing public	Charter creation status: Pre-existing private	Number of charter schools allowed	Duration of charter term	Collective bargaining allowed	Collective bargaining allowed (% of schools[1])
Georgia	State board	Yes	Yes	No	No limit	5 years	No	
Hawaii	State board	Yes	Yes	No	25	4 years	Yes	(100%)
Idaho	Local boards + appeals	Yes	Yes	No	60[6]	12 years	Yes	
Illinois	Local boards with State board review + appeals	Yes	Yes	No[7]	45	3–5 years	Yes	(0%)
Kansas	Local boards	Yes	Yes	No	15	3 years	Yes	(100%)
Louisiana	Local boards and State board + appeals	Yes	Yes	No	42	5 years	Yes	(0%)
Massachusetts	Local boards for conversions and State board for newly created	Yes	Yes	No	50	5 years	Yes	(0%)
Michigan	Local boards and IHEs	Yes	Yes	Yes	No limit	Up to 10 years	Yes	(5%)
Minnesota	Local boards and IHEs + appeals	Yes	Yes	Yes	No limit	3 years	Yes	(8%)
Mississippi	Local boards and State board	No	Yes	No	6	4 to 6	Yes	
Missouri	Local boards + appeals	Yes	Yes	Yes	Other limits[8]	5–10 years	Yes	
Nevada	Both Local boards and State board	Yes	Yes	No	Other limits[9]	3 years	Yes	
New Hampshire	Local boards + appeals	Yes	Yes	No	10 annually[10]	5 years	Yes	
New Jersey	State Commissioner	Yes	Yes	No	135[3]	4 years	Yes	(0%)
New Mexico	State board	No	Yes	No	5	5 years	Yes	(75%)
North Carolina	Local boards, State board, and IHEs	Yes	Yes	Yes	100	5 years	No	
Ohio	Local boards and State board	Yes	Yes	No	No limit	3 years	Yes	
Pennsylvania	Local boards	Yes	Yes	Yes	No limit	Annual review	Yes	(0%)
Rhode Island	State board	Yes	Yes	No	20	5 years	Yes	(100%)
South Carolina	Local boards + appeals	Yes	Yes	Yes	No limit	3 years	No	
Texas	Local boards for conversions and State board for newly created	Yes	Yes	Yes	No limit	Specified in charter	Yes	(21%)
Utah	State board	Yes	Yes	No	8	3 years	Yes	
Virginia	Local boards	Yes	Yes	No	2 per district	3 years	No	
Wisconsin	Local boards	Yes	Yes	Yes[12]	No limit	Up to 5 years	Yes	(94%)
Wyoming	Local boards	Yes	Yes	No	No limit	No	Yes	

[1] The last column of the table states whether collective bargaining is permitted in the state. The number in parentheses is the percentage of schools that have teachers who are covered by a collective bargaining agreement. States with "Yes" without a percentage in parentheses had no operating schools during the 1997–98 school year.
[2] In California, the cap was raised from 100 to 250 in 1997–98, with 100 additional charters allowed per year thereafter.
[3] Charter legislation in Connecticut and New Jersey requires a legislative review (including a review of the number of charter schools allowed) in 1999 and 2000 respectively.
[4] Although Florida's law does not allow private schools to apply directly for charter status, the state allows private schools to convert to charter status if they disband, reincorporate as a new organization with a new board, and enroll students in a public lottery.
[5] The Florida legislation does not specify a statewide limit on the number of charter schools, the legislation does restrict the number of charters granted in each district based on district size. The effective cap for the state is 974 schools.
[6] The Idaho legislation limits the annual number of charters to 12 with a statewide limit of 60.
[7] Illinois state legislation stipulates that a private school must cease operation as a private school before applying for charter status.
[8] Missouri law states that no more than 5 percent of the buildings used for instruction in a district may be converted to charter schools.
[9] Nevada law limits the number of charters granted in each district based on district size, creating an effective cap of about 17 schools, with an exception for schools focusing on at-risk students.
[10] The New Hampshire legislation allows 10 charters annually until the year 2000.
[11] Texas legislation does not limit campus charters, but limits open-enrollment charters to 100 with no limit for charters serving at-risk students.
[12] Wisconsin's law allows the conversion of private schools only in Milwaukee.

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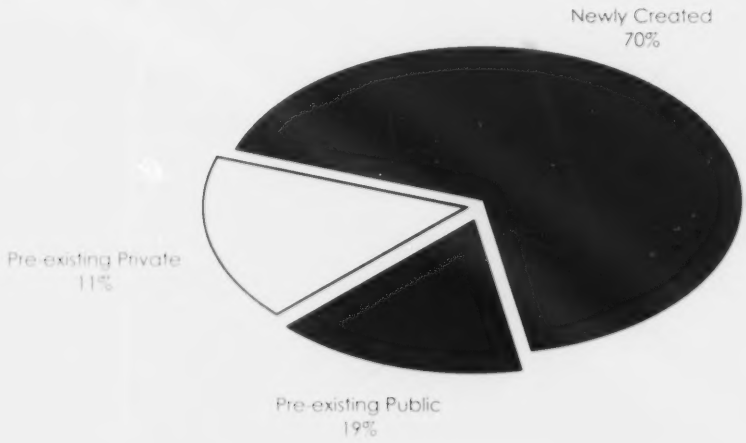
NEWLY CREATED AND PRE-EXISTING CHARTER SCHOOLS

State charter legislation determines whether charter schools can be created from scratch and whether previously public or private schools can convert to charter status. The states' charter laws differ greatly in this regard. Some states restrict charter status only to previously operating public schools while others allow newly created, pre-existing public, and pre-existing private schools to become charters. Throughout this report and our previous reports, we show that newly created, pre-existing public, and pre-existing private school conversions differ greatly in terms of school size, grade levels, the reasons that charter schools were started, the difficulties they encounter during implementation, and their autonomy.

- State charter legislation in all 24 states that had operating charter schools in the 1997–98 school year allowed for the conversion of public schools to charter status. Legislation in 22 states permitted the creation of newly created charter schools. Laws in eight states allowed for the conversion of private schools to charter status, but in two other states—Florida and Illinois—private schools must cease operation and be fully reconstituted if they are to convert into charter schools.
- As of the 1997–98 school year, most charter schools—70 percent—were newly created, while 19 percent were pre-existing public schools, and 11 percent were pre-existing private schools.
- In Arizona, Michigan, North Carolina, and Texas, one in five charter schools converted from private schools. Each of these states permitted the conversion of private schools into charter status and had more than 10 open charter schools in 1997–98.
- The percentage of newly created charter schools has increased over time: 84 percent of the schools that opened in 1997–98 were newly-created in contrast to 53 percent of schools that opened in the 1994–95 school year or earlier.

ESTIMATED PERCENTAGE OF CHARTER SCHOOLS BY CREATION STATUS



ESTIMATED NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF NEWLY CREATED AND PRE-EXISTING CHARTER SCHOOLS, BY YEAR OF SCHOOL OPENING

Charter Schools	Number of created	Newly public	Pre-existing private	Pre-existing
Total in 1997–98	619	434	120	65
% of Total		70.1%	19.4%	10.5%
Opened 1994–95 or earlier	98	53.0%	43.9%	3.1%
Opened 1995–96	143	64.3%	21.0%	14.7%
Opened 1996–97	163	67.4%	16.0%	16.6%
Opened 1997–98	215	83.7%	9.8%	6.5%

ESTIMATED NUMBER AND PERCENTAGES OF CHARTER SCHOOLS, BY CREATION STATUS AND STATE, SPRING 1998

	Total All Schools	Newly created #	Newly created %	Pre-existing public #	Pre-existing public %	Pre-existing private #	Pre-existing private %
Total	619	434	70.1%	120	19.4%	65	10.5%
Alaska	12	12	100.0%	0	0.0%	NA	NA
Arizona	127	88	69.3%	14	11.0%	25	19.7%
California	120	68	56.7%	52	43.3%	NA	NA
Colorado	49	45	91.8%	4	8.2%	NA	NA
Connecticut	11	11	100.0%	0	0.0%	NA	NA
Delaware	3	3	100.0%	0	0.0%	NA	NA
District of Columbia	3	1	33.3%	1	33.3%	1	33.3%
Florida	31	29	93.5%	0	0.0%	2	6.5%
Georgia	18	NA	NA	18	100.0%	NA	NA
Hawaii	2	0	0.0%	2	100.0%	NA	NA
Illinois	6	4	66.7%	1	16.7%	1	16.7%
Kansas	1	0	0.0%	1	100.0%	NA	NA
Louisiana	6	5	83.3%	1	16.7%	NA	NA
Massachusetts	21	19	90.5%	2	9.5%	NA	NA
Michigan	45	68	71.6%	7	7.4%	20	21.1%
Minnesota	25	22	88.0%	2	8.0%	NA (1)	4.0%
North Carolina	27	21	77.8%	1	3.7%	5	18.5%
New Jersey	6	6	100.0%	0	0.0%	NA	NA
New Mexico	4	NA	NA	4	100.0%	NA	NA
Pennsylvania	4	2	50.0%	0	0.0%	2	50.0%
Rhode Island	1	0	0.0%	1	100.0%	NA	NA
South Carolina	1	1	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Texas	29	19	65.5%	3	10.3%	7	24.1%
Wisconsin	17	10	58.8%	6	35.3%	1	5.9%

NOTE: These data rely on responses from the 619 open charter schools that responded to the telephone survey.
NOTE: NA indicates that the state's legislation did not allow for that type of charter school when the schools that responded to our 1998 survey received their charters. Several states have since changed their laws to allow more types of charter schools.

[1] Although Florida's law does not allow private schools to apply directly for charter status, the state allows private schools to convert to charter status if they disband, reincorporate as a new organization with a new board, and enroll students in a public lottery.
[2] Illinois state legislation stipulates that a private school must cease operation as a private school before applying for charter status.
[3] One Minnesota private nonsectarian school converted to charter status. The Minnesota Attorney General has issued an opinion that casts doubt on whether other private schools can convert unless the developers had first tried to establish a newly created charter school and were denied.
[4] Wisconsin's law allows for the conversion of private schools only in Milwaukee.

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B. Basic Characteristics of Charter Schools

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ENROLLMENT BY STATE

The number of students in charter schools varied greatly across the 24 states with operating charter schools in the 1997–98 school year ranging from fewer than 100 students in Kansas to more than 50,000 students in California. Regardless of the size of the state's student population, charter schools continued to enroll a small percentage of public school students.

- During the 1997–98 school year, our data show that charter school enrollment totaled 162,130 in 678 of the 717 open charter schools. This enrollment was 0.6 percent of the students in public schools (in 1996–97) in the 24 charter states that had operating charter schools.
- California had the most charter school students—55,764 or 34 percent of all charter school students in the 24 charter states. California charter school enrollment represented 1 percent of the total public school enrollment in the state.
- Arizona, the state with the second highest number of charter school students, had an estimated 25,128 students enrolled in charter schools. This enrollment was more than 3 percent of the state's public school enrollment, which makes Arizona the state with the highest percentage of public school students enrolled in charter schools.
- Charter school enrollment in the remaining states (omitting Arizona) ranged from less than 0.1 percent to 1.6 percent of public school enrollment.

ESTIMATED ENROLLMENT IN CHARTER SCHOOLS AND ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE 24 CHARTER STATES

State	Charter school enrollment, 1997–98	All public school enrollment, Fall 1996	% of public school students who are in charter schools
Total	162,130	28,239,728	0.6%
Alaska	1,097	126,015	0.9%
Arizona	25,128	749,759	3.4%
California	55,764	5,535,312	1.0%
Colorado	10,888	673,438	1.6%
Connecticut	1,084	523,054	0.2%
Delaware	365	110,549	0.3%
District of Columbia	235	79,159	0.3%
Florida	3,123	2,240,283	0.1%
Georgia	14,522	1,321,239	1.1%
Hawaii	832	188,485	0.4%
Illinois	2,117	1,961,299	0.1%
Kansas	70	465,140	0.0%
Louisiana	463	777,570	0.1%
Massachusetts	6,360	936,794	0.7%
Michigan	18,273	1,662,100	1.1%
Minnesota	2,892	836,700	0.3%
New Jersey	1,424	1,221,013	0.1%
New Mexico	4,563	330,522	1.4%
North Carolina	4,488	1,199,962	0.4%
Pennsylvania	974	1,807,250	0.1%
Rhode Island	190	151,181	0.1%
South Carolina	156	648,980	0.0%
Texas	5,533	3,809,186	0.1%
Wisconsin	1,589	884,738	0.2%

NOTE: Charter school enrollment data includes data for 678 charter schools and is based on 3 sources of data: (1) responses from 618 of 619 charter schools that responded to the Study's telephone survey (1 school did not provide enrollment information) supplemented with (2) enrollment information from state data sources, and (3) the U.S. Department of Education National Center for Educational Statistics, Common Core of Data Survey, 1996–97 Early Release Files.

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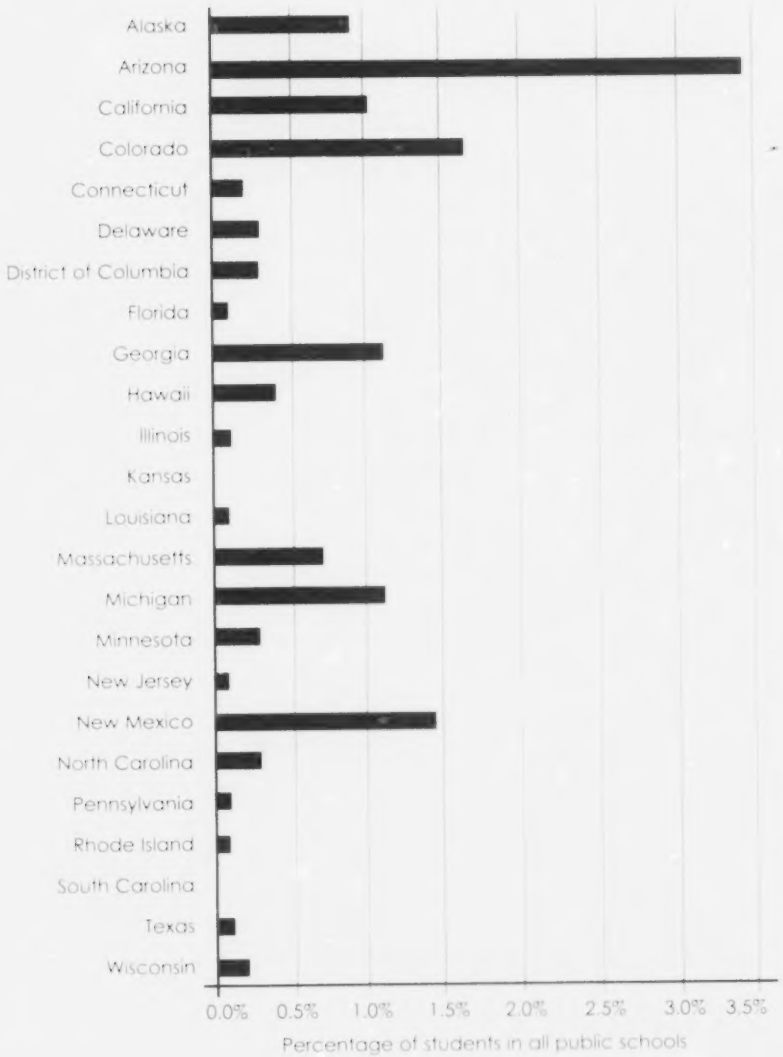
CHARTER SCHOOL ENROLLMENT AS A PERCENTAGE OF PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT, BY STATE



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SCHOOL SIZE

One of the most dramatic characteristics of the charter school movement is the very high percentage of charter schools that are small schools. Our research suggests that both charter school founders and parents highly value a small school environment and that small school size appears to be a principal reason for the high demand for charter schools.

- Approximately 65 percent of all charter schools were small schools enrolling fewer than 200 students in 1997–98. About 36 percent enrolled fewer than 100 students. In contrast, about 17 percent of all public schools in the 24 charter states enrolled fewer than 200 students and only 8 percent enrolled fewer than 100 students (in 1996–97). The median number of students in charter schools is 132 compared to 486 in all public schools.
- Only about 10 percent of charter schools enrolled more than 600 students, compared to more than one-third (36 percent) of all public schools.
- Newly created charter schools were most likely to be small: 74 percent of newly created charter schools enrolled fewer than 200 students, while 35 percent of charter schools that were pre-existing public schools enrolled fewer than 200 students. The median number of students is significantly higher for pre-existing public schools (385) than for either newly created (111) or pre-existing private (125).
- Only 4 percent of newly-created charter schools enrolled more than 600 students compared to 35 percent of charter schools that were pre-existing public schools, many of which were large secondary schools.
- The enrollment distribution of charter schools that were pre-existing private schools more closely resembles the enrollment distribution of newly created charter schools than pre-existing public schools.

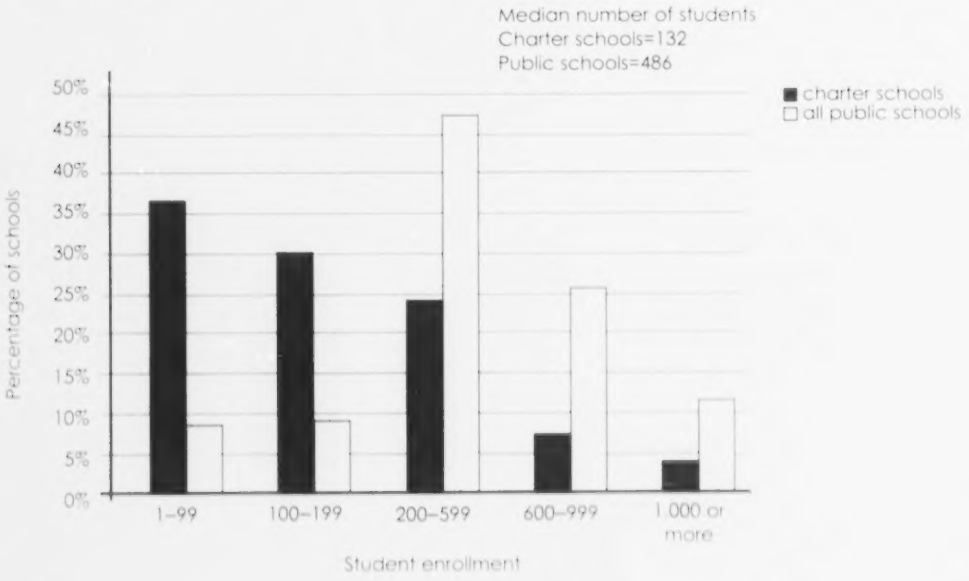
ESTIMATED SCHOOL SIZE FOR CHARTER SCHOOLS AND ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE 24 CHARTER STATES

			Charter School Creation Status		
	All public schools	Charter schools	Newly created	Pre-existing public	Pre-existing private
Number of schools	50,105	678	433	120	65
Median number of students	486	132	111	385	125
School Enrollment Range			% of schools		
1–99	8.2%	36.4%	43.4%	15.0%	33.8%
100–199	8.3%	29.8%	30.9%	20.0%	43.1%
200–599	47.3%	23.6%	21.5%	30.0%	18.5%
600–999	25.2%	7.1%	2.8%	23.3%	3.1%
1,000 or more	11.0%	3.1%	1.4%	11.7%	1.5%

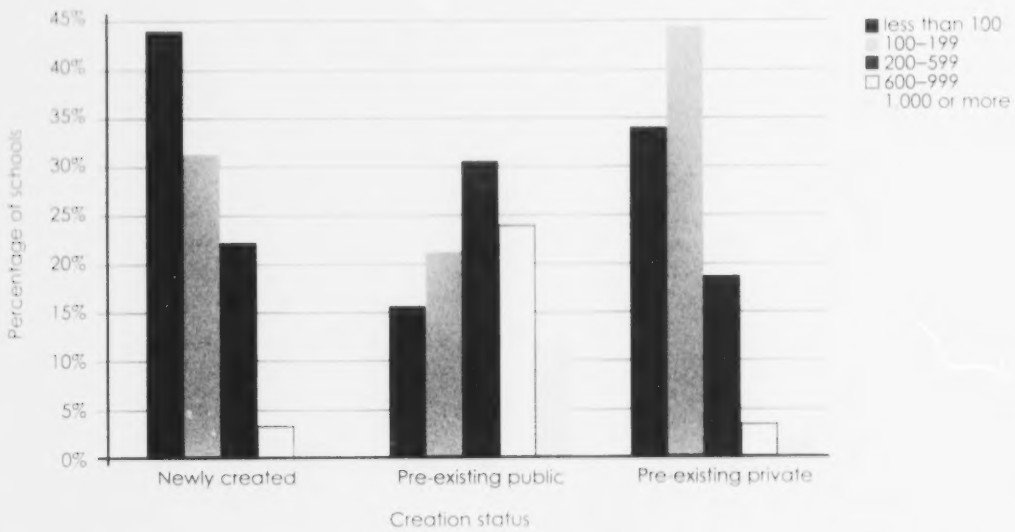
NOTE: The third column called "Charter schools" includes data for 678 charter schools and is based on 2 sources of data: (1) responses from 618 open charter schools that responded to the Study's telephone survey supplemented with enrollment information from state data sources and (2) the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics, Common Core of Data Survey, 1996–97 Early Release Files. The percentages in columns 4, 5, and 6 for the different types of charter schools rely only on the first source of data, the responses from 618 charter schools. The distribution of school size for the 618 is almost the same as that for the 678 charter schools. For the 618 charter schools, the median number of students is 128. We report size for 618 of 619 survey respondents because one school did not report enrollment information and we were unable to obtain this information either from the school or from other sources at the time of this report.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD) Survey, 1996–97, Early Release Files. We use the CCD data here rather than data from the Digest of Education Statistics because the enrollment distribution is based on school-by-school enrollment figures; the Digest provided only overall enrollment figures for each state.

ESTIMATED DISTRIBUTION OF SCHOOL SIZE FOR CHARTER SCHOOLS AND ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS



ESTIMATED DISTRIBUTION OF SCHOOL SIZE FOR NEWLY-CREATED AND PRE-EXISTING CHARTER SCHOOLS



GRADE-LEVEL CONFIGURATION

State laws generally allow a charter school to choose the age range of students it will serve (from the state's minimum to its maximum compulsory attendance age). About one-quarter of charter schools have opted for K–8, K–12, or ungraded schools, returning to an older tradition in American education where students are together for an extended time.

- About half (52 percent) of all charter schools in 1997–98 had the traditional grade-level configurations of elementary, middle, and high school, compared to 78 percent in all public schools in the 24 charter states (in 1996–97).[1]
- About 16 percent of charter schools spanned grades kindergarten through 8 compared to about 6 percent of all public schools and about 8 percent of charter schools spanned kindergarten through grade 12 compared to about 2 percent of all public schools.
- Nine percent of charter schools were exclusively primary schools, focused on early education in kindergarten through grade 3. This compares to about 6 percent of all public schools in the 24 charter states.
- One-quarter of charter schools that were pre-existing public schools were high schools compared to 15 percent of all public schools. Charter schools that were pre-existing private schools were more likely to be primary, K–8, middle-high, and K–12 grade level schools than were either newly created or pre-existing public schools.

ESTIMATED GRADE-LEVEL DISTRIBUTION FOR CHARTER SCHOOLS AND ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE 24 CHARTER STATES

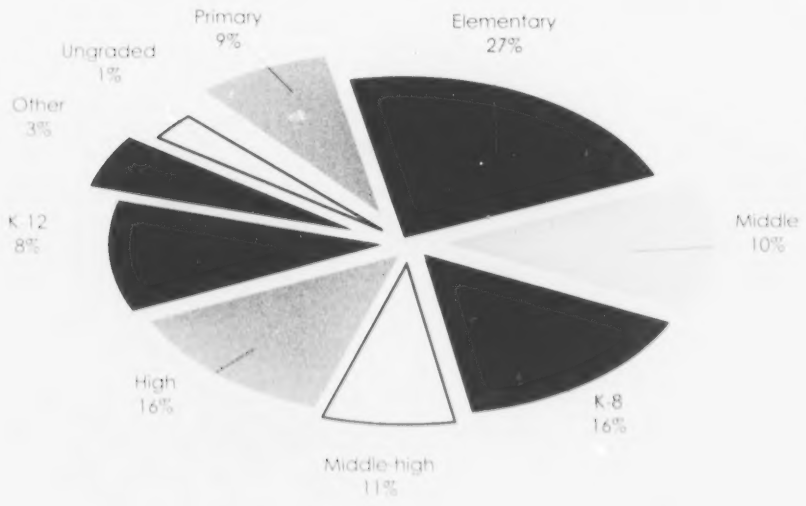
			Charter School Creation Status		
	All public schools	Charter schools	Newly-created	Pre-existing public	Pre-existing private
Number of schools	50,105	619	434	120	65
			% of schools		
Primary	5.9%	9.0%	9.9%	4.2%	12.3%
Elementary	47.3%	26.7%	24.0%	36.7%	26.2%
Middle	14.9%	10.0%	12.0%	8.3%	0.0%
K–8	5.9%	16.3%	16.8%	11.7%	21.5%
Middle-high	5.6%	10.7%	10.8%	7.5%	15.4%
High	15.2%	15.7%	14.5%	25.0%	6.2%
K–12	2.3%	7.9%	7.8%	5.8%	12.3%
Other	2.1%	2.7%	3.2%	0.8%	3.1%
Ungraded	0.8%	1.0%	0.9%	0.0%	3.1%

NOTE: These data rely on responses from the 619 open charter schools that responded to the telephone survey.

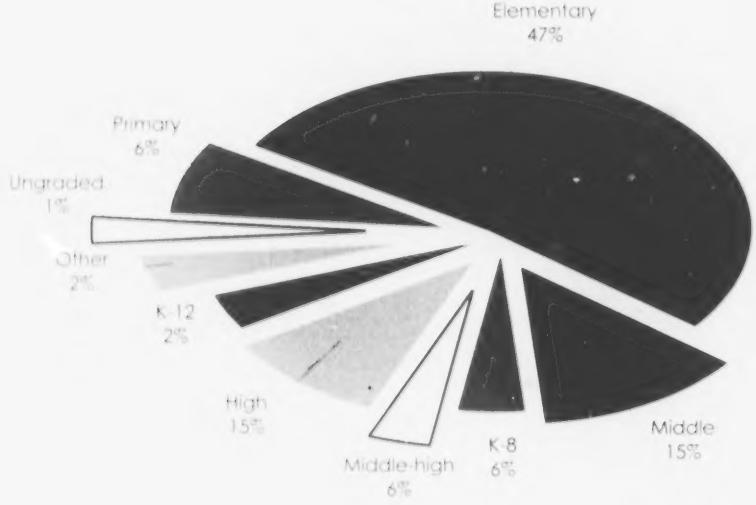
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data Survey, 1996–97 Early Release Files.

[1] Grade levels are defined as follows: Primary includes only grades K–3; Elementary includes any of grades K–3 and any of grades 4–6; Middle includes any of grades 5–8 and no grades K–4 or 9–12; K–8 includes any of grades K–1 and any of grades 4–6 and any of grades 7–8 and no grades 9–12; Middle-high includes any of grades 6–8 and any of grades 9–12 and no grades K–5; High includes any of grades 9–12 and no grades K–8; K–12 includes any of grades K–3 and any of grades 4–6 and any of grades 7–8 and any of grades 9–12; Other includes all other grade-level breakdowns; Ungraded indicates no grade levels used at the school.

ESTIMATED GRADE-LEVEL DISTRIBUTION FOR CHARTER SCHOOLS



GRADE-LEVEL DISTRIBUTION FOR ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE 24 CHARTER STATES



CERTIFICATED TEACHERS

Charter legislation frees charter schools from many state regulations, but teacher certification is one area in which the state charter laws vary in terms of how much freedom they allow charter schools. More than half of the charter states require charter schools to hire certificated staff. In the other states, charter schools are free to hire noncertificated teachers.

- Legislation in 14 of the charter states requires teacher certification. In most of those states, the percentage of certificated teachers in charter schools was similar to the percentage in all public schools. Four states—Delaware, Louisiana, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania—were exceptions to this statement. Each of these states has at least 10 percent fewer certificated teachers in charter schools than in all public schools.
- Legislation in 10 of the charter states either does not require teacher certification or does not specify whether teacher certification is required. Charter schools in six of these states—Arizona, Florida, Illinois, Massachusetts, Texas, and the District of Columbia—hired at least 10 percent fewer certificated teachers than all public schools in these states.

ESTIMATED PERCENTAGE OF CERTIFICATED STAFF IN CHARTER SCHOOLS AND ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE 24 CHARTER STATES

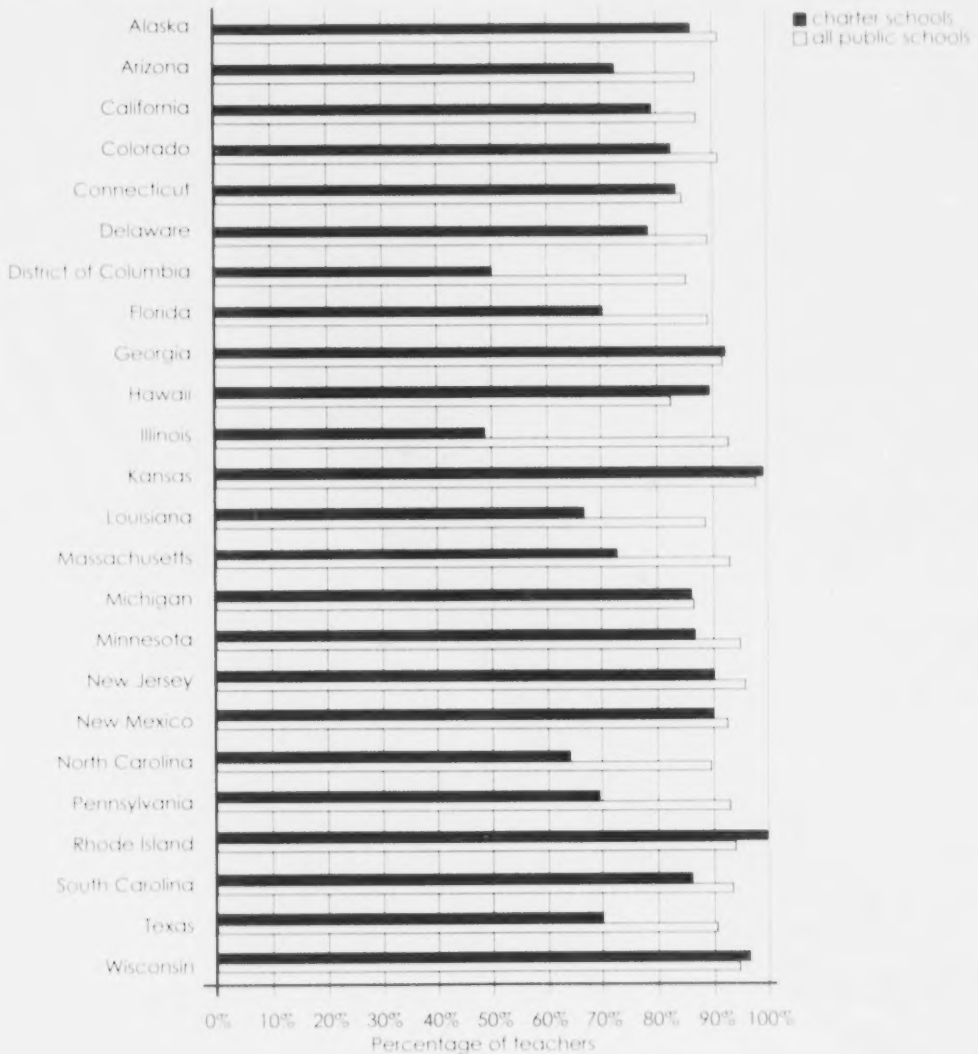
State	State law requires teacher certification for charter school teachers	% of certificated instructional staff	
		Charter schools	All public schools
Alaska	Yes	86.7%	91.5%
Arizona	No	72.7%	87.5%
California	No	79.5%	87.3%
Colorado	Yes(1)	82.8%	91.4%
Connecticut	No	83.7%	85.5%
Delaware	Yes	79.2%	89.6%
District of Columbia	No	50.6%	85.8%
Florida	No	71.0%	89.8%
Georgia	Yes(1)	92.5%	92.4%
Hawaii	No	90.1%	83.0%
Illinois	No	49.3%	93.6%
Kansas	Yes	100.0%	98.4%
Louisiana	Yes(2)	67.3%	89.4%
Massachusetts	No	73.4%	93.7%
Michigan	Yes	86.6%	87.3%
Minnesota	Yes	87.4%	95.5%
New Jersey	Yes	91.2%	96.3%
New Mexico	Yes	90.6%	93.5%
North Carolina	Yes(3)	64.7%	90.2%
Pennsylvania	Yes(2)	70.0%	93.8%
Rhode Island	Yes	100.0%	93.9%
South Carolina	Yes(4)	86.7%	93.8%
Texas	Not specified	70.2%	90.9%
Wisconsin	No(5)	97.2%	95.7%

NOTE: This exhibit is based on responses from 608 of the 619 open charter schools that responded to the telephone survey. Percentage of certificated staff is computed by dividing total number of certificated classroom and special education teachers by the total number of instructional staff including certificated classroom and special education teachers, noncertificated classroom and resource teachers, and other instructional staff, excluding aides and assistants.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Schools and Staffing in the United States: A Statistical Profile, 1993–1994*. Certificated instructional staff include teachers with advanced, regular, and alternative certification.

[1] "Yes" means that the state law required the same level of certification as in other public schools; waiver provisions in effect for other public schools also apply to charter schools. (1) In Georgia and Colorado, certification requirements may be waived. (2) In Louisiana and Pennsylvania, at least 75 percent of the staff must be certified. (3) In North Carolina, 75 percent of grade K–5 teachers and 50 percent of grade 6–12 teachers must be certificated. (4) In South Carolina, in new schools at least 75 percent must be certified while in pre-existing schools, at least 90 percent must be certified. (5) In Wisconsin, certification is not required if certified staff are not available.

ESTIMATED PERCENTAGE OF CERTIFICATED STAFF IN CHARTER SCHOOLS AND ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE 24 CHARTER STATES



COMPUTERS FOR INSTRUCTION

One of the seven priorities of the U.S. Department of Education is to have every classroom connected to the Internet by the Year 2000 and to have all the students be technologically literate. In order for public schools to make progress toward these goals, they must provide technology access for students in the classroom. Unlike other public schools, however, some charter schools are new organizations that face fiscal difficulties that may limit the schools' ability to purchase computers or to develop a technologically strong academic program. On the other hand, a surprisingly large proportion of charter schools use computers extensively and the majority of computers in charter schools have multimedia capability.

- The estimated average student to computer ratio in charter schools is 9.8 which is slightly less than the estimated 10.0 average for all public schools in 1996–97.[1]
- About two-thirds of our sample of charter schools had a student to computer ratio of fewer than 10 students per computer. The estimated median student to computer ratio is 6.0 to 1 across this sample of charter schools.
- About 6 of 10 charter schools have computers available for instruction in more than three-quarters of their classrooms. However, 15 percent of charter schools have classrooms with no computers available for instruction.
- Regardless of the number of computers in charter schools, 60 percent of charter schools have a large percentage (more than three-quarters) of computers capable of running advanced or multimedia applications.

ESTIMATED STUDENT TO COMPUTER RATIO FOR A SELECTED SAMPLE OF CHARTER SCHOOLS

	# of schools	% of schools
Total in sample	355	
1 to less than 5	117	33.0%
5 to less than 10	123	34.7%
10 or more	96	27.0%
0 computers used for instruction	19	5.3%

ESTIMATED PERCENTAGE OF CHARTER SCHOOLS USING COMPUTERS IN THEIR CLASSROOMS AND PERCENTAGE OF COMPUTERS CAPABLE OF RUNNING MULTIMEDIA APPLICATIONS

	Charter schools that have the following proportion of: Classrooms with computers used for instruction		Computers with multimedia capacity[2]	
	# of schools	% of schools	# of schools	% of schools
Total in sample	354		332	
None	54	15.3%	27	8.1%
Up to one-quarter	34	9.6%	30	9.0%
One-quarter to one-half	36	10.2%	47	14.2%
One-half to three-quarters	13	3.7%	28	8.4%
Three-quarters to all	217	61.2%	200	60.2%

NOTE: These data are drawn from questions asked only in the 1997 new schools survey and the 1997 or 1998 follow-up surveys, resulting in responses from 365 schools. Out of these 365 schools, 355 reported information on number of computers. Columns 2 and 3 in the second table are based on responses from 354 of the 355 possible schools, one schools did not provide information about percent of classrooms using computers. Columns 4 and 5 in the second table are based on responses from 332 of the 335 possible schools; 19 schools reported that they had no computers available for instruction and thus the student to computer ratio could not be computed for these schools. Four additional schools did not report information on multimedia computers.

1 *Computers and Classrooms: The Status of Technology in U.S. High Schools.* May 1997. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service, Policy Information Center. This average represents all 50 states.

2 The distribution of schools with multimedia or advanced capacity is similar across charter schools without regard to the numbers of computers at the school with the exception that schools with 10 or fewer computers are slightly less likely to have multimedia capacity than schools with more than 10 computers.

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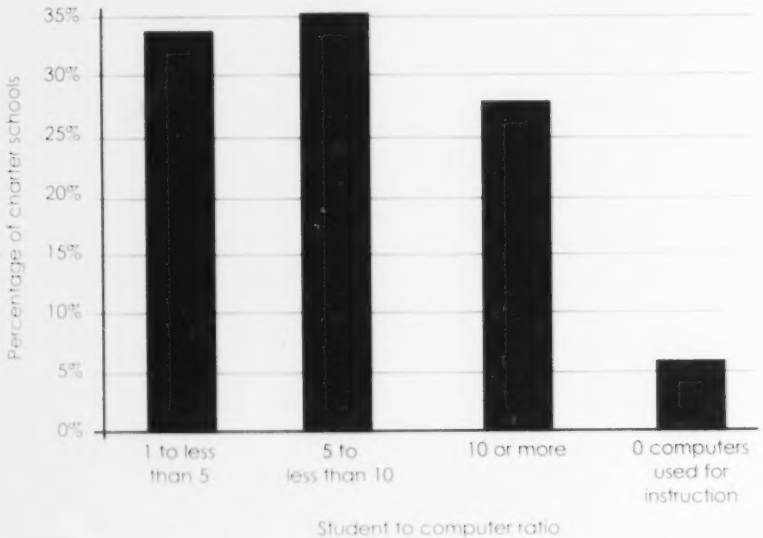
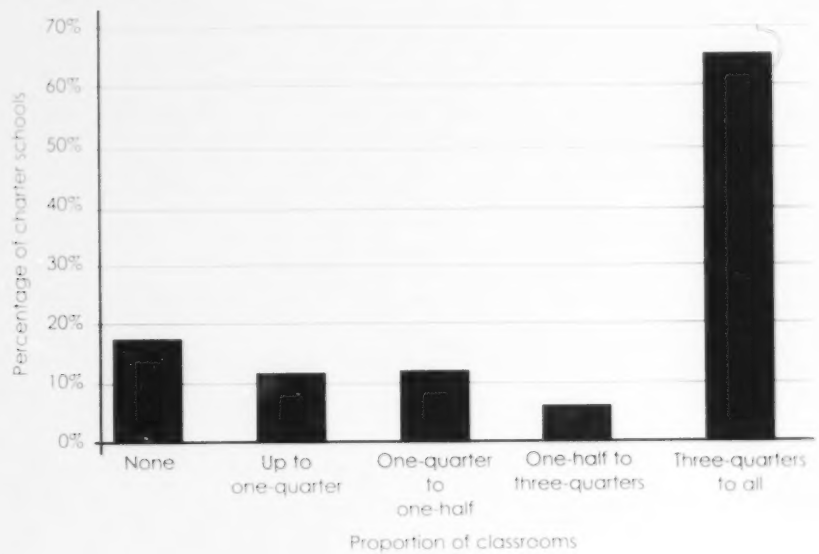
ESTIMATED STUDENT TO COMPUTER RATIO FOR A SELECTED SAMPLE OF CHARTER SCHOOLS



ESTIMATED PERCENTAGE OF CLASSROOMS IN CHARTER SCHOOLS WITH COMPUTERS USED FOR INSTRUCTION



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C. Students of Charter Schools

STUDENT RACIAL/ETHNIC COMPOSITION 30

SCHOOL RACIAL/ETHNIC DISTRIBUTION 32

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STUDENT RACIAL/ETHNIC COMPOSITION

One fear regarding the charter movement is that charter schools will be elitist schools, serving a lower proportion of students of color than other public schools. Our research suggests that, in fact, most charter schools had about the same percentage of white students as their district average. More than 70 percent of charter schools were within 20 percent of the average district percentage of white students, while about 16 percent had a distinctly higher percentage of students of color than their surrounding district. The remaining 12 percent of schools had a lower percentage of students of color than their surrounding district.

- This table shows two methods for comparing the racial/ethnic composition of charter schools to the racial/ethnic composition of all public schools. Both methods indicate that charter schools have enrolled a slightly larger percentage of students of color than all public schools.
- When the total number of students is used as the base for calculation, slightly more than half (52 percent) of the charter school students (in 1997–98) were white, compared to almost 60 percent white students in all public schools in the 24 charter states (in 1996–97). Charter schools were also slightly more likely to serve black, Hispanic, and American Indian students (19, 21, and 4 percent, respectively) compared to all public schools in the 24 charter states that served 17 percent black students, 19 percent Hispanic students, and 1 percent American Indian students.
- Using the school as the base for calculation, the average estimated percentage of white students across charter schools (55 percent) was somewhat lower than the average percentage of white students across all public schools (63 percent). On average, charter schools enrolled a slightly larger percentage of black students (22 percent) than all public schools (16 percent).

RACIAL/ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF CHARTER SCHOOL STUDENTS (1997–98), COMPARED TO ALL PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE 24 CHARTER STATES (1996–97)

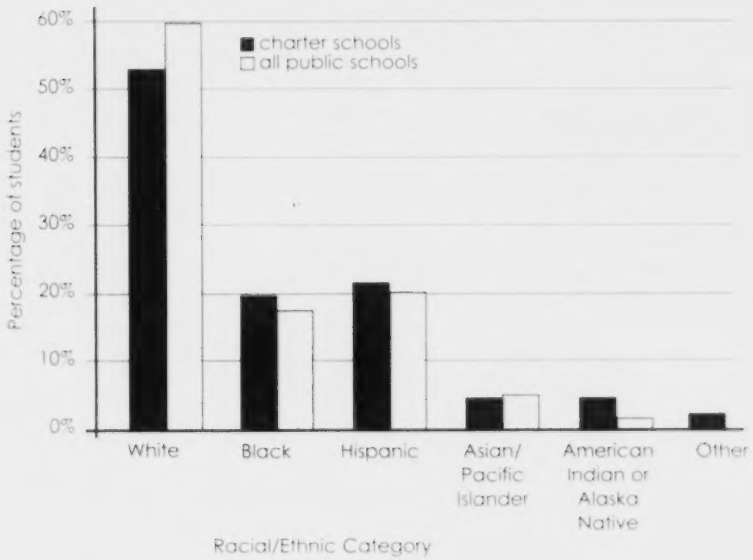
	Students # of students in category		Schools % of students in category		Average of school % of students in racial category	
Racial/ethnic categories	Charter schools	Public schools	Charter schools	Public schools	Charter schools	Public schools
Total	138,935	27,886,307			589	49,316
White, not of Hispanic origin	71,943	16,367,055	51.8%	58.7%	55.0%	62.5%
Black, not of Hispanic origin	26,393	4,680,563	19.0%	16.8%	22.0%	16.0%
Hispanic	28,554	5,395,949	20.6%	19.3%	15.7%	16.6%
Asian or Pacific Islander	5,157	1,164,334	3.7%	4.2%	2.5%	3.3%
American Indian or Alaska Native	5,310	278,392	3.8%	1.0%	4.0%	1.6%
Other [2]	1,578	NA	1.1%	NA	0.8%	NA

NOTE: These data rely on responses from 589 of 619 open charter schools that responded to the survey. The 589 schools were those with valid racial data; that is, schools where the number of students in the racial/ethnic categories was equal to the total student enrollment reported. Data from 30 schools were considered invalid for this analysis.

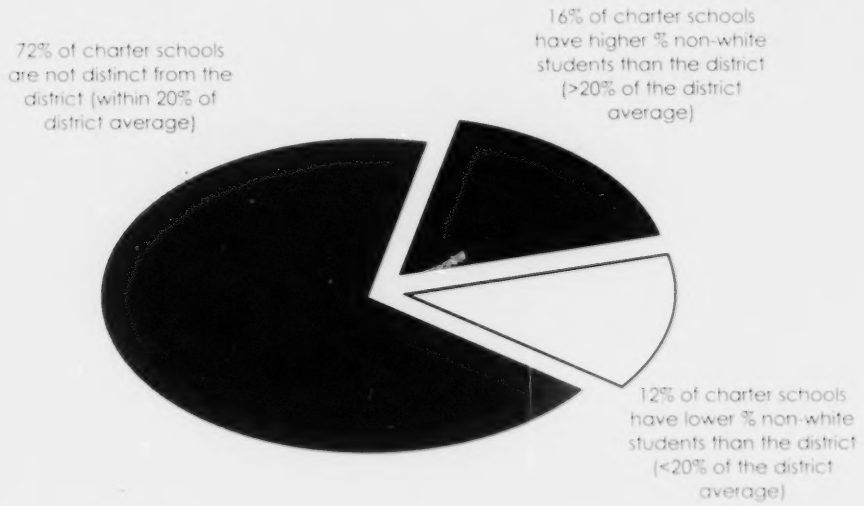
1 These totals differ somewhat from totals presented earlier. The charter school total relies on 589 open charter schools as indicated above, while other figures utilize different numbers of schools. The total for all public schools differs from that presented in exhibit 5 because it relies on data from different sources and different years.

2 The National Center for Education Statistics does not report an "other" racial category.

CHARTER SCHOOL ENROLLMENT, BY RACE/ETHNICITY COMPARED TO PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT IN THE 24 CHARTER STATES



STUDENT RACIAL/ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF CHARTER SCHOOLS COMPARED TO THEIR SURROUNDING DISTRICTS


72% of charter schools are not distinct from the district (within 20% of district average)
16% of charter schools have higher % non-white students than the district (>20% of the district average)
12% of charter schools have lower % non-white students than the district (<20% of the district average)

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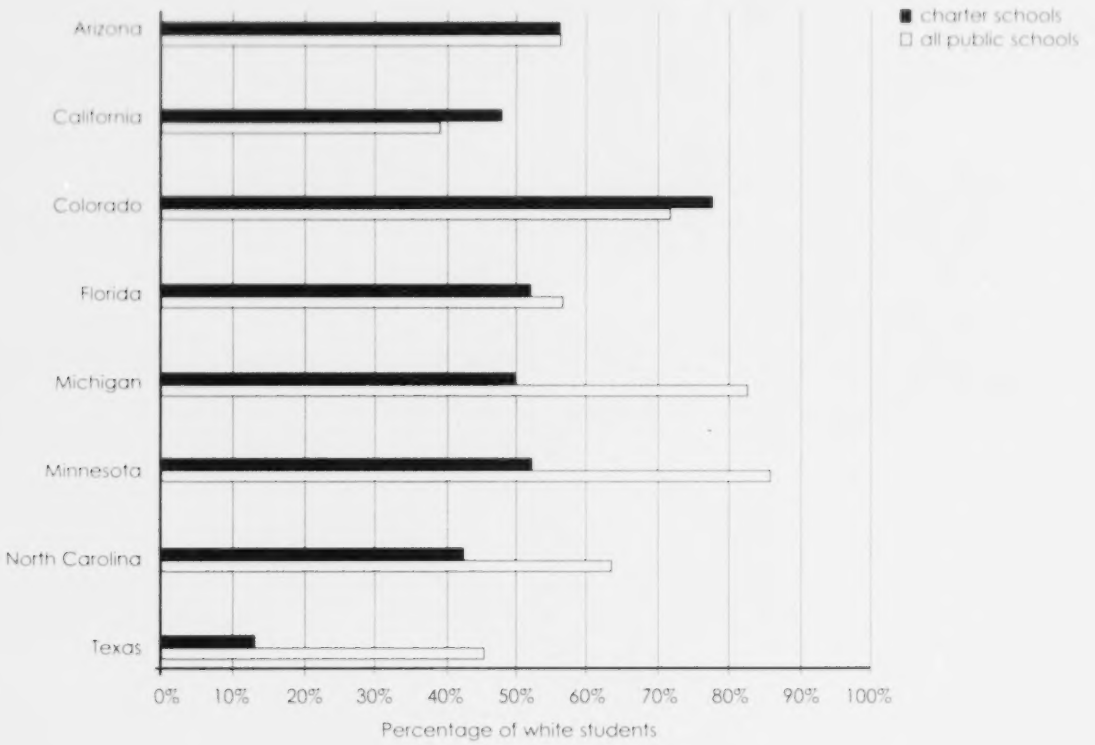
SCHOOL RACIAL/ETHNIC DISTRIBUTION

The states vary greatly in the racial/ethnic composition of their public school students, and charter schools generally mirror the state's racial composition. However, charter schools in 14 of the 24 charter states enrolled a considerably higher percentage of non-white students than do the other public schools. In some cases, this focus results from provisions in state law that target charter schools toward serving disadvantaged students.

- In 14 states, the percentage of white students enrolled in charter schools in 1997–98 was lower (at least 5 percent lower) than the percentage of white students in all public schools in the state in 1996–97.
- Of the 13 states with 10 or more charter schools, charter schools in 6 states—Connecticut, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, North Carolina, and Texas—enrolled a much lower percentage of white students than all public schools.
- In four states—Alaska, California, Colorado, and Georgia—charter schools enrolled a higher percentage of white students than all public schools. This percentage difference was greater than 10 percent in Alaska and Georgia.
- Two states—Arizona and Florida—had about the same (less than 5 percent difference) percentage of white students in charter schools as compared to all public schools.

ESTIMATED AVERAGE OF SCHOOL PERCENTAGES OF WHITE STUDENTS ACROSS CHARTER SCHOOLS AND ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN STATES WITH MORE THAN 20 CHARTER SCHOOLS



ESTIMATED AVERAGE SCHOOL RACIAL/ETHNIC PERCENTAGES ACROSS CHARTER SCHOOLS AND ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

State		# of schools	% White	% Black	% Hispanic	% Asian/ Pacific Island	% American Indian Alaska Native	% Other
Alaska	charter	10	81.6%	2.3%	1.1%	3.2%	11.6%	0.2%
	all public	482	63.1%	4.7%	2.9%	4.5%	24.8%	
Arizona	charter	118	56.1%	9.8%	18.6%	1.3%	13.8%	0.4%
	all public	1,281	56.7%	4.3%	30.1%	1.8%	7.1%	
California	charter	115	48.1%	10.2%	31.7%	6.5%	1.8%	1.7%
	all public	7,980	39.5%	8.7%	39.7%	11.2%	0.9%	
Colorado	charter	46	77.9%	5.7%	13.0%	2.2%	1.2%	0.0%
	all public	1,468	72.0%	5.5%	18.8%	2.6%	1.1%	
Connecticut	charter	11	27.0%	49.7%	22.9%	0.1%	0.3%	0.0%
	all public	1,023	71.7%	13.5%	11.9%	2.6%	0.3%	
Florida	charter	29	51.8%	41.3%	4.9%	1.2%	0.7%	0.1%
	all public	2,789	56.7%	25.4%	15.9%	1.8%	0.2%	
Georgia	charter	17	72.6%	18.8%	4.9%	2.4%	0.2%	1.1%
	all public	1,798	57.9%	37.7%	2.6%	1.7%	0.1%	
Illinois	charter	6	16.6%	60.5%	22.5%	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%
	all public	4,171	63.0%	21.1%	12.7%	3.1%	0.1%	
Louisiana	charter	6	32.2%	64.8%	1.1%	0.6%	0.9%	0.4%
	all public	1,468	50.5%	46.4%	1.2%	1.3%	0.6%	
Massachusetts	charter	19	47.2%	27.1%	19.3%	1.1%	0.4%	4.9%
	all public	1,810	77.9%	8.5%	9.4%	4.0%	0.2%	
Michigan	charter	92	49.9%	42.8%	3.8%	0.9%	2.4%	0.2%
	all public	3,002	83.3%	11.1%	2.9%	1.7%	1.0%	
Minnesota	charter	25	52.6%	23.6%	2.0%	13.0%	7.9%	0.9%
	all public	1,785	86.4%	5.2%	2.2%	4.2%	2.0%	
New Jersey	charter	4	29.3%	30.1%	35.5%	5.1%	0.0%	0.0%
	all public	2,278	62.5%	18.5%	13.5%	5.3%	0.2%	
New Mexico	charter	4	39.8%	3.9%	43.9%	2.5%	9.9%	0.0%
	all public	729	38.6%	2.4%	47.5%	1.0%	10.5%	
North Carolina	charter	27	42.6%	53.1%	1.4%	0.3%	1.8%	0.8%
	all public	1,997	63.9%	30.8%	2.3%	1.5%	1.5%	
Pennsylvania	charter	4	27.1%	67.7%	3.8%	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%
	all public	3,110	80.2%	14.2%	3.7%	1.8%	0.1%	
Texas	charter	28	12.9%	26.9%	58.1%	1.2%	0.0%	0.9%
	all public	6,875	45.6%	14.3%	37.4%	2.4%	0.3%	
Wisconsin	charter	17	73.6%	19.4%	3.1%	3.1%	0.7%	0.1%
	all public	2,092	82.7%	9.6%	3.5%	2.9%	1.3%	

NOTE: These data rely on response from 578 out of the 619 open charter schools that responded to our survey. Of the 578 schools, 11 schools in 6 states (Delaware, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Kansas, Rhode Island, and South Carolina) have been omitted from this exhibit because each state has fewer than 3 charter schools and therefore numbers are small and percentages are not meaningful. All schools in this chart have valid racial data; that is, schools where the number of students in the racial/ethnic categories was equal to the total student enrollment reported.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data Survey 1996–97 Early Release Files.

[1] The National Center for Education Statistics does not report an "other" racial category.

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STUDENT ELIGIBILITY FOR FREE AND REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH

Do charter schools serve the same proportion of economically disadvantaged students as other public schools? Students' eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch under the National School Lunch program is one measure of economic disadvantage that allows us to compare students in charter schools to those in all public schools. Charter schools serve a significantly higher proportion of economically disadvantaged students compared to all public schools in eight states. In some of those states, charter legislation targets low-income or at-risk students. Charter schools serve a distinctly lower proportion of economically disadvantaged students in three states.

- In the 1997–98 school year, 37 percent of charter school students in the 24 states with charter schools were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, a figure very similar to the 38 percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch in all public schools in those states.
- The percentage of students eligible for free or reduced lunch is at least 10 percentage points higher in charter schools than in all public schools in eight of the charter states: Connecticut, Illinois, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Texas.
- In five charter states—Alaska, Delaware, Georgia, Hawaii, and New Mexico—the percentage of eligible students is at least 10 percentage points lower than in all public schools.
- In seven charter states, the percentage of eligible students in charter schools is within 10 percentage points of that for all public schools. Four of these states have large numbers of charter schools—Arizona, California, Colorado, and Michigan.

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF STUDENTS ELIGIBLE FOR FREE AND REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH

	Charter schools (1997–98)		All public schools (1994–95)	
	# eligible students	% of all students	# eligible students	% of all students
Total	53,970	36.7%	10,146,087	37.6%
Alaska	60	7.0%	32,340	25.7%
Arizona	9,640	39.4%	284,357	40.1%
California	17,820	35.4%	2,257,008	42.4%
Colorado	1,967	18.1%	174,023	27.8%
Connecticut	521	49.6%	113,221	22.8%
Florida	1,080	37.7%	895,510	43.9%
Georgia	3,803	29.4%	501,824	40.6%
Illinois	1,396	88.5%	583,238	30.8%
Louisiana	344	74.3%	474,608	59.3%
Massachusetts	2,490	45.1%	225,110	25.6%
Michigan	5,540	34.1%	459,747	28.7%
Minnesota	1,502	52.5%	217,376	26.8%
New Jersey	201	43.1%	326,022	28.3%
New Mexico	1,167	30.1%	159,740	49.6%
North Carolina	1,465	40.1%	413,729	36.5%
Pennsylvania	399	69.3%	541,793	31.1%
Texas	3,456	68.7%	1,662,900	46.1%
Wisconsin	438	27.6%	210,011	24.9%

NOTE: The total number of students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch is based on 566 of the 619 open charter schools that responded to the survey. Of the 566 schools, 9 schools in 6 states (Delaware, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Kansas, Rhode Island, and South Carolina) are not displayed in the table because each state has 3 or fewer charter schools and percentages are not meaningful. The "Total" row includes data from all 24 charter states, including the 6 states not included in the table. For each state, the percentage of students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch is computed by dividing the number of eligible students by the total number of students enrolled in schools in that state.

SOURCE: The percentage of students in all public schools eligible for free and reduced-price lunch was computed using two sources. The source for the numerator (eligibility counts by state) were the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services, Program Information Division, for the 1994–95 school year. The data for the denominator (total student enrollment) were derived from the *Digest of Education Statistics, 1997*, U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

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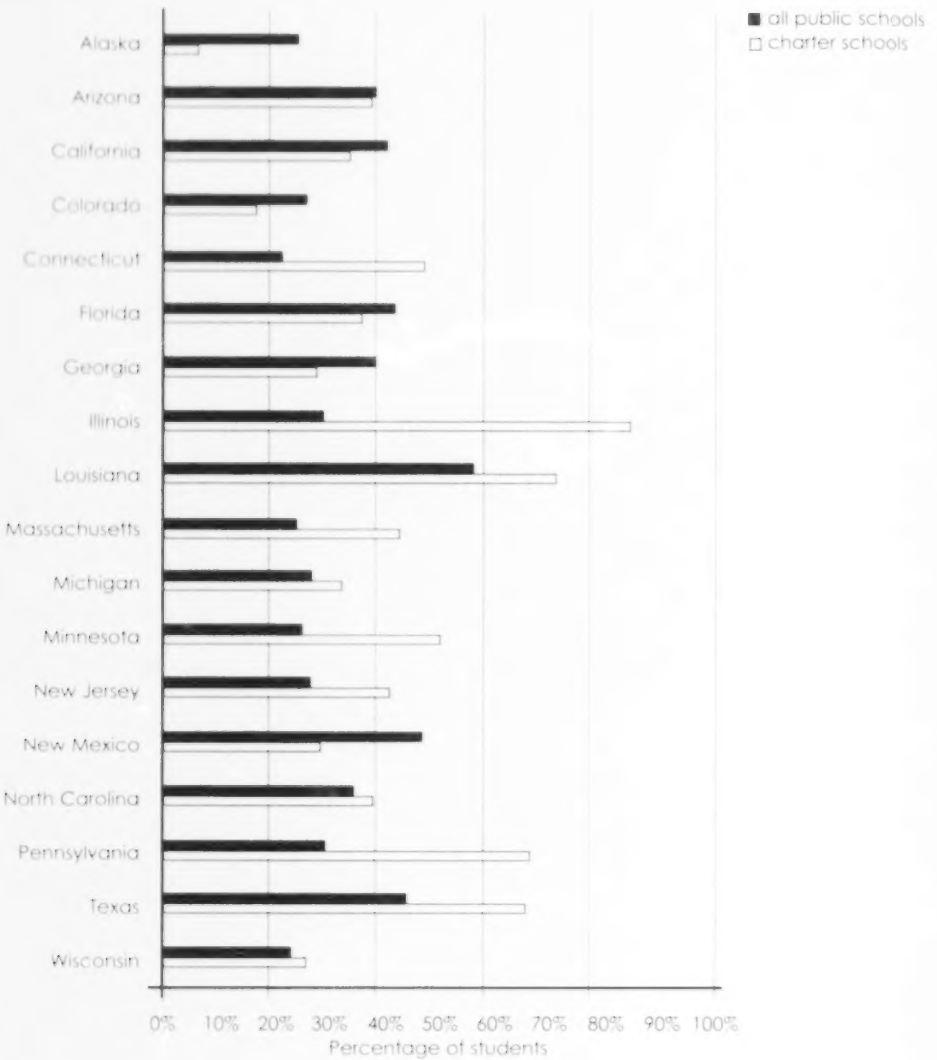
PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS ELIGIBLE FOR FREE AND REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH IN CHARTER SCHOOLS AND ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS



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STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Although charter schools are freed from many of the state regulations that govern schools, they are still subject to laws requiring them to provide access to students with disabilities. Our previous reports have documented that some charter schools are specifically designed to serve students with disabilities.

- In the 1997–98 school year, students with disabilities made up 8 percent of the student population in charter schools in the 24 charter states, compared to 11 percent of students with disabilities in all public schools in those states.
- The percentage of students with disabilities varied little from state to state for all public schools, while this percentage varied greatly across the charter schools. In the 1997–98 school year, the percentage of students with disabilities ranged from about 2 percent of students in New Jersey to a high of about 25 percent of students in Florida.
- In most states, the percentage of students with disabilities in charter schools was similar to the percentage of students with disabilities in all public schools. The percentage of students with disabilities was at least 10 percentage points higher in charter schools than in all public schools in Florida. The percentage of students with disabilities was more than 10 percentage points lower in charter schools than in all public schools in New Jersey (which had only six open charter schools).

ESTIMATED NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

	Charter schools (1997–98)		All public schools (1996–97)	
	# of students	% of students	# of students	% of students
Total	12,243	8.3%	3,185,443	11.2%
Alaska	43	5.0%	15,744	12.1%
Arizona	1,730	7.1%	71,742	9.0%
California	3,576	7.1%	528,273	9.4%
Colorado	857	7.9%	64,275	9.5%
Connecticut	84	8.0%	73,578	14.0%
Florida	720	25.1%	295,762	13.2%
Georgia	1,122	8.7%	126,856	9.4%
Illinois	172	10.9%	239,415	12.1%
Louisiana	30	6.5%	83,277	10.5%
Massachusetts	546	9.9%	144,488	15.5%
Michigan	853	5.3%	175,219	10.5%
Minnesota	491	17.2%	90,353	11.4%
New Jersey	10	2.1%	185,635	15.5%
New Mexico	673	17.4%	44,440	13.5%
North Carolina	523	14.3%	137,013	11.3%
Pennsylvania	77	13.4%	194,953	10.8%
Texas	362	7.2%	428,859	11.2%
Wisconsin	137	8.6%	96,489	11.0%

NOTE: The total number of students with disabilities is based on 554 of the 619 open charter schools that responded to the survey, although the exhibit does not show breakdowns for states with 3 or fewer charter schools. The percentage of students with disabilities in Florida is inflated by one school that reported large numbers of charter students with disabilities. The total number of students with disabilities is based on 554 of the 619 open charter schools that responded to the survey. Of the 554 schools, an additional 10 schools in 6 states (Delaware, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Kansas, Rhode Island, and South Carolina) are not displayed in the table because each state still has 3 or fewer charter schools and percentages are not meaningful. The "Total" row includes data from all 24 charter states, including the 6 states not included in the table.

SOURCE: The national figures rely on two sources. The source for the numerator (the number of students served under IDEA) was: *Twentieth Annual Report to Congress of the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*, U.S. Department of Education, (forthcoming). The source for the denominator (enrollment in the 24 charter states) was U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data Survey, 1996–97 Early Release Files.

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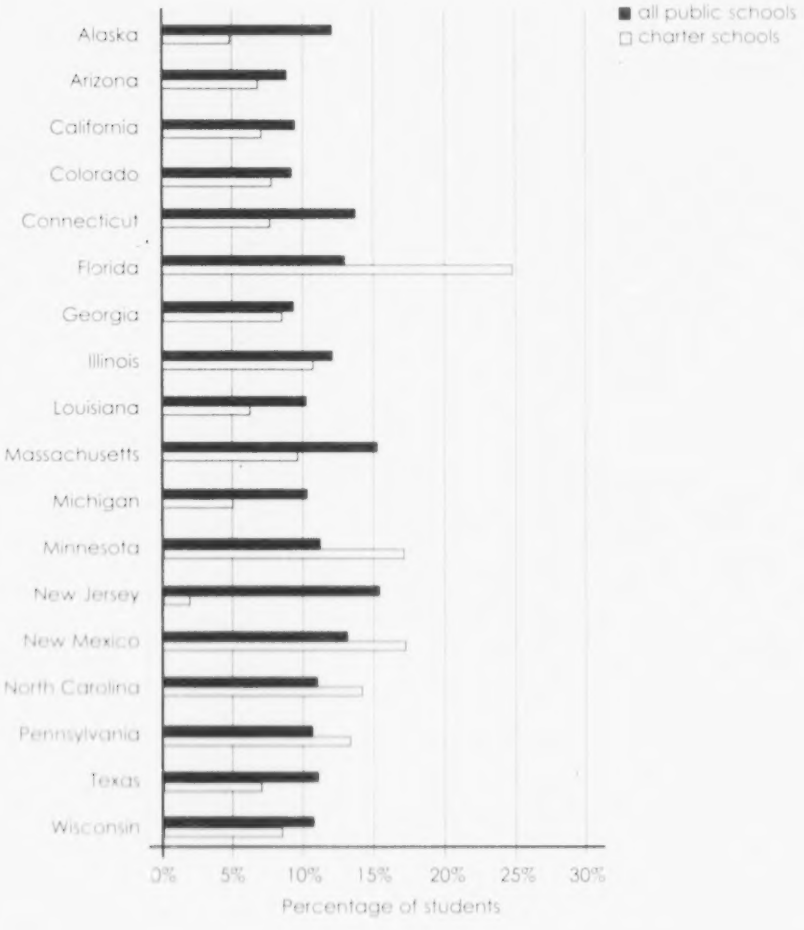
ESTIMATED PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN CHARTER SCHOOLS AND ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS



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LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT STUDENTS

Limited English Proficient (LEP) students are concentrated in a few states in both charter and all public schools. Across the 24 charter states, the percentage of LEP students in charter schools is similar to that of all public schools, but the state-by-state picture reveals great variation.

- In the 1997–98 school year, the percentage of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students enrolled in charter schools was similar to the percentage of LEP students in all public schools in the 1994–95 school year; both charter schools and all public schools enrolled about 10 percent LEP students.
- There was wide variation across states in the percentage of LEP students in charter schools, ranging from lows of less than 1 percent in nine states to a high of 24 percent in New Mexico.
- The largest percentages of LEP students in both charter and other public schools were in California, New Mexico, and Texas. Charter schools in New Mexico enrolled about the same percentage of LEP students as the total of all public schools in the state, while charter schools in Texas enrolled a larger percentage of LEP students than other public schools in the state. Charter schools in California enrolled a smaller percentage of LEP students than other public schools.
- Charter schools in Alaska and Florida enrolled a much lower percentage of LEP students than all public schools in the state, while charter schools in Minnesota and Texas enrolled much larger percentages than all public schools in the state.

ESTIMATED NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF LEP STUDENTS

	Estimated LEP students			
	Charter schools (1997–98)		All public schools (1994–95)	
	# of students	% of students	# of students	% of students
Total [1]	14,856	10.1%	2,814,982	10.7%
Alaska	6	0.7%	34,942	27.7%
Arizona	1,643	6.7%	93,528	11.9%
California	9,208	18.3%	1,381,393	24.6%
Colorado	120	1.1%	24,675	7.4%
Connecticut	8	0.8%	19,819	3.8%
Florida	7	0.2%	288,603	12.2%
Georgia	382	3.0%	14,339	1.1%
Illinois	54	3.4%	118,246	6.0%
Louisiana	2	0.4%	6,494	0.9%
Massachusetts	339	6.1%	44,394	4.7%
Michigan	407	2.5%	25,988	1.6%
Minnesota	321	11.2%	28,237	3.4%
New Jersey	3	0.6%	49,300	4.0%
New Mexico	954	24.6%	78,107	24.0%
North Carolina	90	2.5%	24,771	2.0%
Pennsylvania	20	3.5%	NA	NA
Texas	1,140	22.7%	513,634	13.4%
Wisconsin	22	1.4%	23,270	2.6%

NOTE: The total number of LEP students is based on 611 of the 619 open charter schools that responded to the survey, although the exhibit does not show breakdowns for states with 3 or fewer charter schools. For each state, the percentage of LEP charter school students is computed by dividing the number of LEP students by the total number of enrolled students. The total number of LEP students is based on 611 of the 619 open charter schools that responded to the survey. Of the 611 schools, an additional 9 schools in 6 states (Delaware, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Kansas, Rhode Island, and South Carolina) are not displayed in the table because each states has 3 or fewer charter schools and the percentages are not meaningful. The "Total" row includes data from all 24 charter states, including the 6 states not included in the table.

SOURCE: Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs, *Summary Report of the Survey of the States' Limited English Proficient Students and Available Educational Programs and Services 1996–1997*, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 1998.

[1] The total excludes data from the state of Pennsylvania, which did not report information on LEP students for all public schools.

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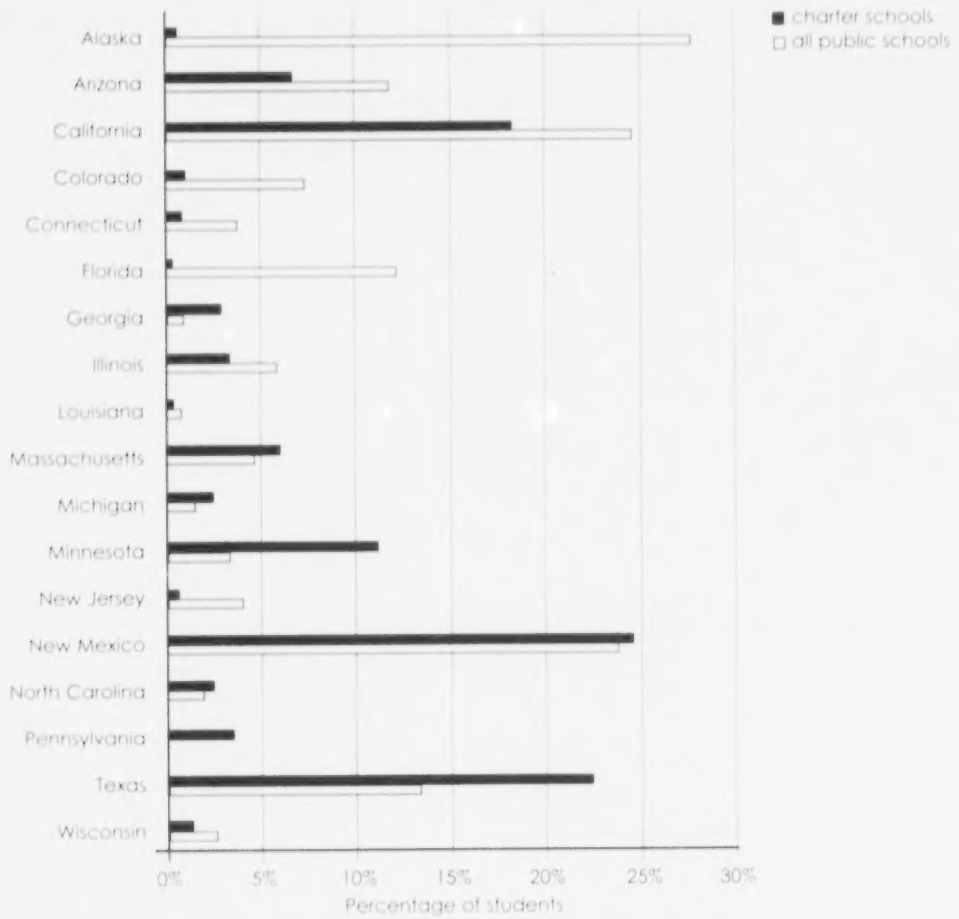
ESTIMATED NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF LEP STUDENTS IN CHARTER SCHOOLS AND IN ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS



D. Starting, Implementing, and Being Accountable

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WHY CHARTER SCHOOLS ARE STARTED

Why are charter schools founded? Each founding story is unique, but broad patterns are discernible across different types of charter schools. Charter schools begin from the inspiration of educators, parents, or community leaders who want to create a different learning environment for children. As the founders see it, most seek an alternative vision of schooling that they could not realize in the general public school system. Newly created schools in particular report on curriculum and instructional approaches they want to establish and the organizational climate they wish to create. Many pre-existing public schools converted to charter status in order to gain increased autonomy, while many pre-existing private schools sought to attain stable funding and attract students to their approach. Finally, some charter schools—about one in four—established their charter to serve a special population of students, often ones that were "at risk" in the general public school system.

- Three of 4 charter schools reported that realizing an alternative vision for schooling motivated the school's founding. Nearly 6 of 10 charter schools reported realizing an alternative vision for schooling as their most important reason for becoming a charter school.
- More than a quarter of charter schools (26 percent) reported that serving a special population was a reason for founding, and one-fifth said that serving a special population was their most important motivation.
- Newly created and pre-existing schools differ on their primary founding reasons. Newly created were much more likely to be founded primarily to realize an alternative vision (68 percent) than were pre-existing public schools (40 percent) or pre-existing private schools (35 percent).
- In contrast, nearly as many pre-existing public schools sought to gain autonomy from state or district regulation (38 percent) as sought primarily to realize an educational vision (40 percent).
- Pre-existing private schools converted to charter for a combination of reasons—to attract students (22 percent), to serve a special population (19 percent), or for financial reasons (19 percent).

ESTIMATED PERCENTAGE OF CHARTER SCHOOLS BY REASONS FOR FOUNDING

Reason for founding charter school	Percentage that cited each reason	Percentage that cited most important reason charter school creation status			
	Total	Total	Newly created	Pre-existing public	Pre-existing private
	615	595	422	115	58
Realize an alternative vision	73.0%	58.9%	67.5%	40.0%	34.5%
Gain autonomy/flexibility	16.3%	10.3%	3.6%	38.3%	3.4%
Serve special population	26.2%	19.5%	22.7%	7.8%	19.0%
Attract students	10.2%	3.9%	1.9%	1.7%	22.4%
Financial reasons	8.6%	3.9%	0.9%	7.0%	19.0%
Parent involvement	10.2%	3.6%	3.3%	5.2%	1.7%

NOTE: These data rely on responses from 615 out of 619 open charter schools that responded to the survey. Schools were asked about their reasons for founding the first time they were surveyed. In one survey question, schools were asked the reason for founding their schools and they could reply with more than one reason (reported in column 2 above). In a separate question, schools were asked to choose one of the named reasons as the primary reason for founding their school (reported in columns 3 through 6 above); the data from 595 of the 615 charter schools are included for columns 3 through 6 because 20 schools did not choose a primary reason. The data presented in columns 4 through 6 represent the percentage of the total number of each type of school. The valid number of pre-existing public schools is 115 out of 120 possible open schools; the valid number of pre-existing private schools is 58 out of 65 possible open schools; the valid number of newly created charter schools is 422 out of 434 possible open schools. The difference between the valid and possible number of schools is because some schools did not select a primary reason for founding their charter school.

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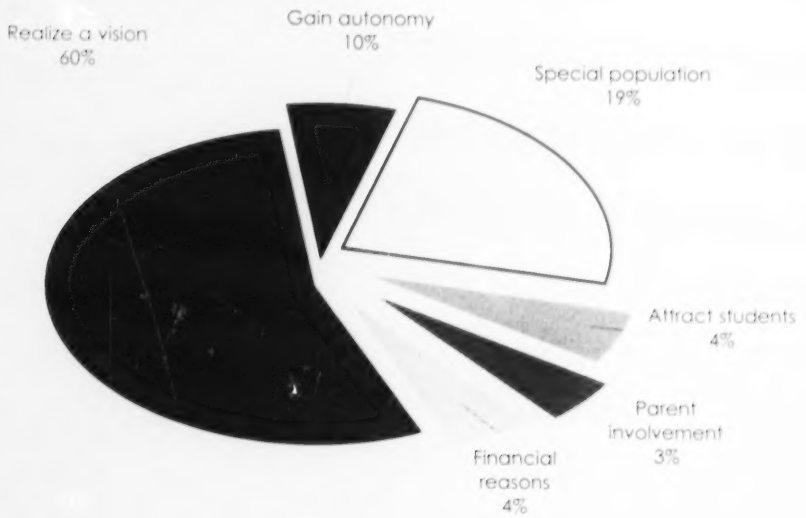
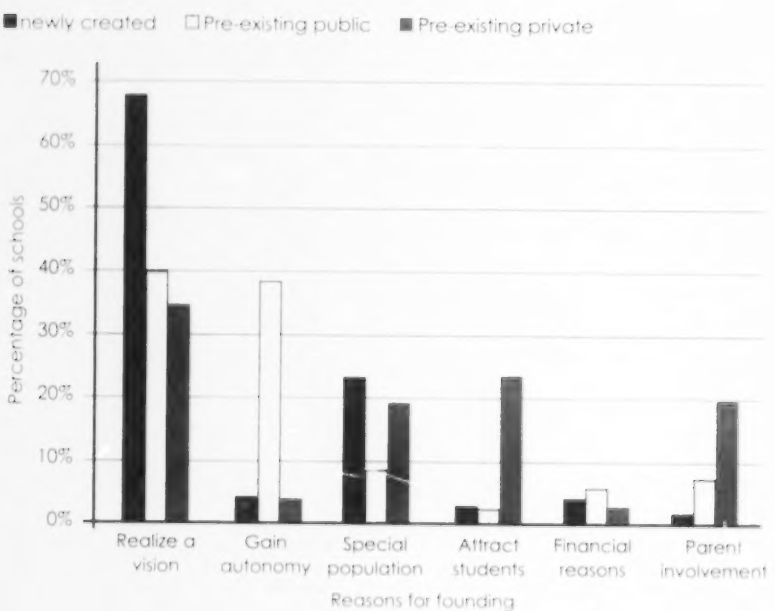
PERCENTAGE OF CHARTER SCHOOLS, BY MOST IMPORTANT REASON FOR FOUNDING



PERCENTAGE OF NEWLY CREATED VERSUS PRE-EXISTING CHARTER SCHOOLS, BY MOST IMPORTANT REASON FOR FOUNDING



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IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

Our research suggests that many charter founders face significant challenges in starting and operating a charter school. We asked a knowledgeable respondent at each charter school in every year of the Study to rate the difficulty of overcoming each barrier in a list of possible barriers to charter school implementation. The most pressing challenges for newly created charter schools concern financial difficulties and other problems akin to starting a new business. Many pre-existing public schools that converted to charter status also have experienced political and bureaucratic difficulties during development and implementation.

- Most charter schools reported that fiscal obstacles, including funding for start-up and ongoing operations, were difficult challenges during implementation. Lack of planning time and facilities also caused problems for charter schools.
- Newly created and pre-existing public charter schools that converted to charter status showed different patterns of barriers to implementation.
- A higher percentage of newly created charter schools faced greater difficulties than pre-existing public schools with both start-up and operating funding, facilities, and health and safety regulations.
- Compared to newly created charter schools, a higher proportion of pre-existing public schools reported great difficulty with state or local board opposition, state department of education resistance, and collective bargaining agreements.
- In addition to financial matters, especially a lack of start up funds, about 18 percent of pre-existing private schools that converted to charter status cited state department of education resistance or new requirements for health and safety as challenges they had to face.

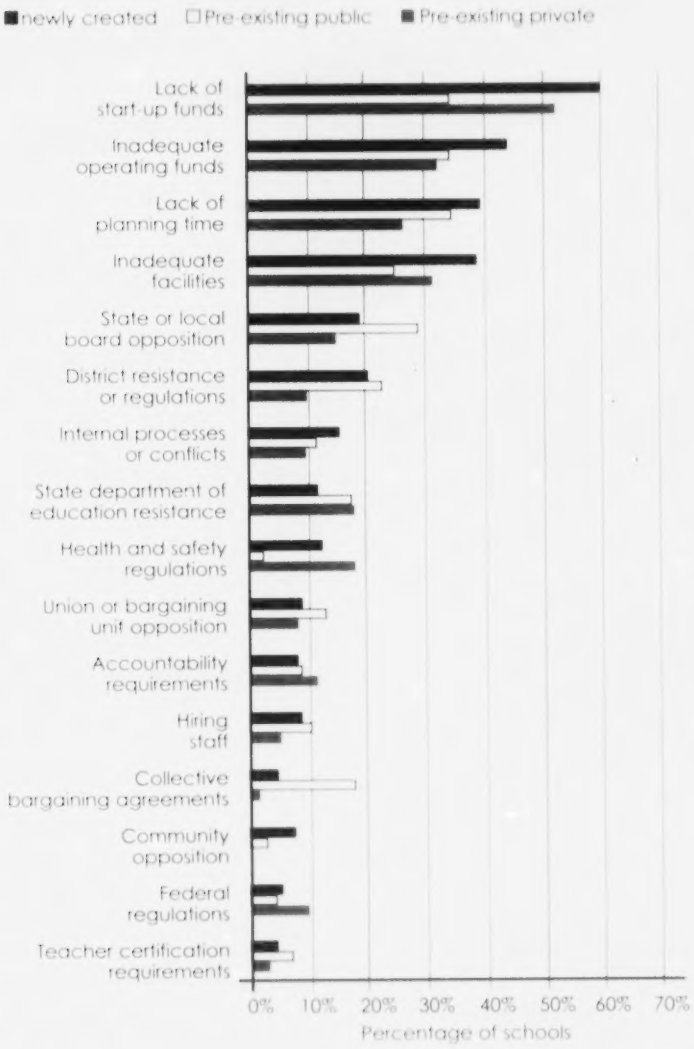
ESTIMATED PERCENTAGE OF CHARTER SCHOOLS REPORTING DIFFICULTIES IN IMPLEMENTING THEIR CHARTERS[1]

	Total	Newly created	Pre-existing public	Pre-existing private
Lack of start-up funds	54.7%	60.4%	34.6%	52.7%
Lack of planning time	37.4%	39.7%	34.8%	26.7%
Inadequate facilities	35.8%	39.1%	25.2%	31.5%
Inadequate operating funds	41.4%	44.6%	34.2%	32.7%
State or local board opposition	20.7%	19.2%	29.1%	15.1%
District resistance or regulations	19.9%	20.6%	22.8%	10.2%
Internal processes or conflicts	14.2%	15.5%	11.7%	10.0%
State department of education resistance	13.5%	11.8%	17.7%	18.3%
Health and safety regulations	11.3%	12.6%	2.7%	18.3%
Union or bargaining unit opposition	9.8%	9.1%	13.3%	8.6%
Accountability requirements	8.9%	8.5%	9.0%	11.6%
Hiring staff	8.8%	8.9%	10.7%	5.0%
Collective bargaining agreements	7.0%	4.8%	18.0%	1.7%
Community opposition	6.0%	7.8%	2.7%	0.0%
Federal regulations	5.6%	5.4%	4.4%	10.0%
Teacher certification requirements	4.9%	4.5%	7.2%	3.4%

NOTE: These data are drawn from questions asked only in the new school surveys. Responses to these questions about barriers represent a range of 204 to 210 out of 230 open charter schools that responded to the 1998 new schools survey, 129 to 149 out of 153 open charter schools that responded to the 1997 new schools survey, and 238 to 244 out of 246 open charter schools that responded to the 1998 new schools survey. Overall, the responses represent a range of 571 to 601 out of 619 open charter schools that responded to one of the 3 new school surveys.

[1] We asked schools to rate the difficulty of each barrier on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being not at all difficult and 5 being very difficult. The percentages in this table represent the percentages of schools that rated each barrier difficult or very difficult.

PERCENTAGE OF CHARTER SCHOOLS REPORTING DIFFICULTIES, BY CHARTER CREATION STATUS



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AUTONOMY AND CONTROL

The increased autonomy inherent in the charter concept allows charter schools the flexibility to make independent decisions about both educational and management issues. In some cases, schools' decisions are constrained either by provisions of the state's charter legislation or by decisions and practices implemented by their charter granting agency. One measure of a school's autonomy is the extent to which it can exercise control over critical decisions affecting its performance. Using school reports on their sense of control over critical decisions, we find that most charter schools feel they have considerable autonomy, except over student admissions policy. However, charter schools that converted from public school status appear to have less autonomy than newly created charter schools.

- In the 1997–98 school year, most charter schools reported that they had primary control or authority over their administrative operations (budget, purchase of supplies and equipment, and hiring teaching staff) and the operation of their education program (daily and yearly schedule, curriculum, student admissions, discipline, and student assessment). A lower percentage (64 percent) of schools reported that they had control over their student admissions policies.
- In cases where charter schools reported that they did not have control, control rested with either the district or the charter granting agency or was shared between the charter school and one of those agencies.
- A higher percentage of newly created schools compared to pre-existing public schools reported having primary control over all areas of decisionmaking. In particular, pre-existing public schools have less control over their daily schedule, school calendar, and budget, as well as their student admissions policy.
- Charter schools that converted from private status have a pattern of autonomy similar to newly created schools, except that a lower percentage felt they had control over admissions policy (52 percent) and student assessment policies (68 percent).

ESTIMATED PERCENTAGE OF CHARTER SCHOOLS, BY SOURCE OF PRIMARY CONTROL FOR VARIOUS SCHOOL DECISIONS AND OPERATIONS

	Source of primary control			
Area of control	School	District/ charter granting agency	Both	Other
Budget	76.3%	18.9%	2.4%	2.4%
Purchase of supplies/equipment	91.1%	7.0%	0.8%	1.1%
School calendar	78.9%	18.8%	1.0%	1.3%
Daily schedule	95.3%	2.4%	1.0%	1.3%
Student assessment policies	76.6%	16.7%	3.6%	3.1%
Student admissions policies	63.7%	26.9%	6.5%	2.9%
Student discipline	92.1%	3.9%	1.5%	2.5%
Establishment of curriculum	86.1%	8.8%	2.1%	3.0%
Hiring of teaching staff	89.3%	6.3%	1.6%	2.8%

NOTE: These data rely on responses from between 614 and 618 out of 619 open charter schools that responded to the telephone survey. Schools were asked to rate each of these items separately, resulting in the range of responses. One school did not respond to this survey item and 5 schools answered "don't know" for certain items. The data presented in columns 3 through 5 of the table on the facing page represent the percentage of each type of school responding to each item. The valid number of pre-existing public schools ranges from 118 to 120 schools; the valid number of open pre-existing private schools ranges from 63 to 65 open schools; the valid number of open newly created schools ranges between 431 to 434 schools. The difference in range is because some schools responded "don't know."

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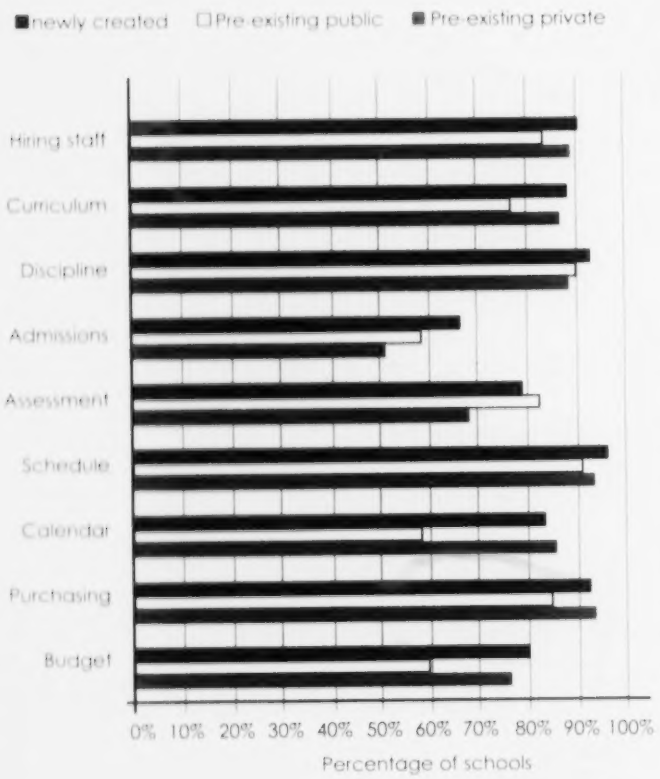
ESTIMATED PERCENTAGE OF CHARTER SCHOOLS WITH PRIMARY CONTROL, BY CREATION STATUS

Area of control	Percentage of schools with primary control	Charter school creation status		
		Newly created	Pre-existing public	Pre-existing private
Hiring of teaching staff	89.3%	90.8%	84.0%	89.2%
Establishment of curriculum	86.1%	88.2%	77.1%	87.7%
Student discipline	92.1%	93.1%	90.0%	89.2%
Student admissions policies	63.7%	66.7%	58.8%	51.6%
Student assessment policies	76.6%	78.9%	72.5%	68.3%
Daily schedule	95.3%	96.3%	72.5%	93.8%
School calendar	78.9%	83.6%	58.3%	85.9%
Purchase of supplies/equipment	91.1%	92.4%	85.0%	93.8%
Budget	76.3%	80.5%	60.2%	76.0%

ESTIMATED PERCENTAGE OF NEWLY CREATED AND PRE-EXISTING CHARTER SCHOOLS WITH CONTROL OVER VARIOUS SCHOOL DECISIONS AND OPERATIONS



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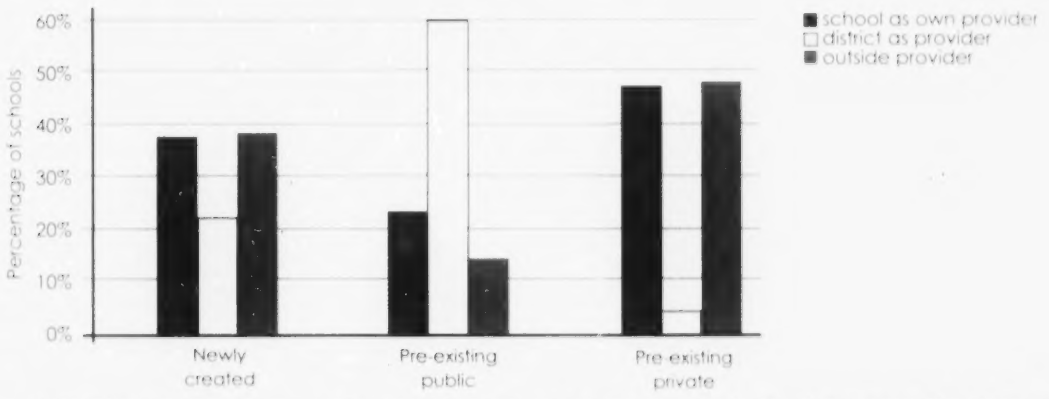
AUTONOMY AND CHOICE OF SERVICE PROVIDERS

The autonomy afforded by the charter allows charter schools to make alternative arrangements for the acquisition of both goods and services. Autonomy also affords charter schools the opportunity to choose the mix of services offered to their students and families. Some charter schools have taken advantage of the flexibility provided by the charter to rethink how services are provided, including providing some services with either school staff or volunteers, purchasing the services from the district, or purchasing the services from an outside provider. Newly created, pre-existing public, and pre-existing private schools differ in the sources from which they acquire services.

- About two-thirds of charter schools provided one or more noneducational services to their students, including transportation, food service, and before and after school care. More than three-quarters of the schools provided social and/or health services.
- When charter schools provided health services, about an equal percentage of the services were provided by the school (35 percent), the district (30 percent), or an outside provider (33 percent). Most charter schools that offered before and after school care provided the services themselves (64 percent). When charter schools offered social services, an outside provider (41 percent) was most often the source. When charter schools offered food programs/services or transportation services, the district was most often the provider of these services (40 percent and 41 percent, respectively).
- Averaging across all service areas, about one-third of charter schools provided services themselves to their students, about one-third of charter schools used an outside provider, and less than one-third used the district as the service provider.
- Newly created schools and pre-existing private schools were much more likely to either provide services themselves or to secure services from an outside provider. Between half and 80 percent of newly created and pre-existing private schools provided their own purchasing services, custodial services, and before/after school care.
- Pre-existing public schools were much more likely to seek services from their districts. More than half of pre-existing public schools sought payroll, accounting, purchasing, health, food programs, legal services, custodial, building maintenance, and transportation services from the district.

AVERAGE PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOLS SELECTING A GIVEN SERVICE PROVIDER, BY CHARTER SCHOOL CREATION STATUS



NOTE: These data rely on responses from 618 out of 619 open charter schools that responded to the telephone survey. These data are drawn from questions asked only in the first year of administration of the new school survey. This exhibit represents non-weighted averages across all service areas. Unweighted averages are used so as to not inflate the average for services that are more commonly provided.

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PERCENTAGE OF CHARTER SCHOOLS THAT OFFER SERVICES, BY CHARTER CREATION STATUS

Services provided in charter schools (percentage of schools with services)	Charter creation status	Percentage of schools with services provided solely by: School as provider	District as provider	Outside provider
	Average of all services[1]	34.3%	27.0%	33.3%
	Newly created	36.2%	21.1%	36.9%
	Pre-existing public	22.2%	58.9%	13.6%
	Pre-existing private	46.0%	3.5%	47.1%
Payroll (100.0%)	**Total % across all types**	**22.5%**	**32.7%**	**41.1%**
	Newly created	24.5%	26.1%	45.5%
	Pre-existing public	7.5%	73.3%	17.5%
	Pre-existing private	36.9%	1.5%	55.4%
Accounting (100.0%)	**Total % across all types**	**33.2%**	**23.9%**	**33.5%**
	Newly created	35.8%	17.8%	37.4%
	Pre-existing public	22.5%	58.3%	9.2%
	Pre-existing private	35.4%	1.5%	52.3%
Insurance (99.8%)	**Total % across all types**	**19.3%**	**30.5%**	**47.8%**
	Newly created	19.6%	23.8%	53.5%
	Pre-existing public	12.5%	70.0%	15.8%
	Pre-existing private	29.2%	1.5	69.2%
Purchasing (99.8%)	**Total % across all types**	**57.2%**	**23.0%**	**13.3%**
	Newly created	61.9%	17.3%	15.0%
	Pre-existing public	28.3%	55.0%	5.8%
	Pre-existing private	79.6%	1.6%	15.6%
Custodial (97.7%)	**Total % across all types**	**45.5%**	**20.4%**	**31.1%**
	Newly created	47.0%	14.0%	35.4%
	Pre-existing public	33.6%	53.8%	11.8%
	Pre-existing private	57.8%	0.0%	39.1%
Building maintenance (95.4%)	**Total % across all types**	**37.0%**	**19.4%**	**36.2%**
	Newly created	37.5%	14.9%	39.6%
	Pre-existing public	28.6%	57.1%	8.2%
	Pre-existing private	43.6%	5.1%	46.2%
Legal services (93.4%)	**Total % across all types**	**18.4%**	**27.7%**	**50.0%**
	Newly created	18.9%	22.1%	54.6%
	Pre-existing public	10.4%	61.7%	23.5%
	Pre-existing private	30.5%	0.0%	69.5%
Health services (80.9%)	**Total % across all types**	**35.2%**	**29.8%**	**32.6%**
	Newly created	38.9%	23.5%	34.9%
	Pre-existing public	20.6%	60.7%	16.8%
	Pre-existing private	40.8%	6.1%	51.0%
Social services (79.6%)	**Total % across all types**	**26.8%**	**24.4%**	**40.7%**
	Newly created	25.4%	20.0%	46.0%
	Pre-existing public	23.8%	47.6%	20.0%
	Pre-existing private	40.4%	5.8%	48.1%
Before/after school care (70.1%)	**Total % across all types**	**64.2%**	**10.4%**	**18.5%**
	Newly created	69.1%	4.2%	19.4%
	Pre-existing public	48.4%	33.7%	8.4%
	Pre-existing private	66.0%	2.0%	32.0%
Food programs (66.8%)	**Total % across all types**	**24.5%**	**40.0%**	**29.8%**
	Newly created	22.9%	35.4%	35.4%
	Pre-existing public	15.7%	64.7%	13.7%
	Pre-existing private	57.5%	7.5%	32.5%
Transportation (65.2%)	**Total % across all types**	**28.0%**	**41.2%**	**25.3%**
	Newly created	32.4%	34.4%	25.9%
	Pre-existing public	14.6%	70.9%	12.6%
	Pre-existing private	34.1%	9.8%	53.7%

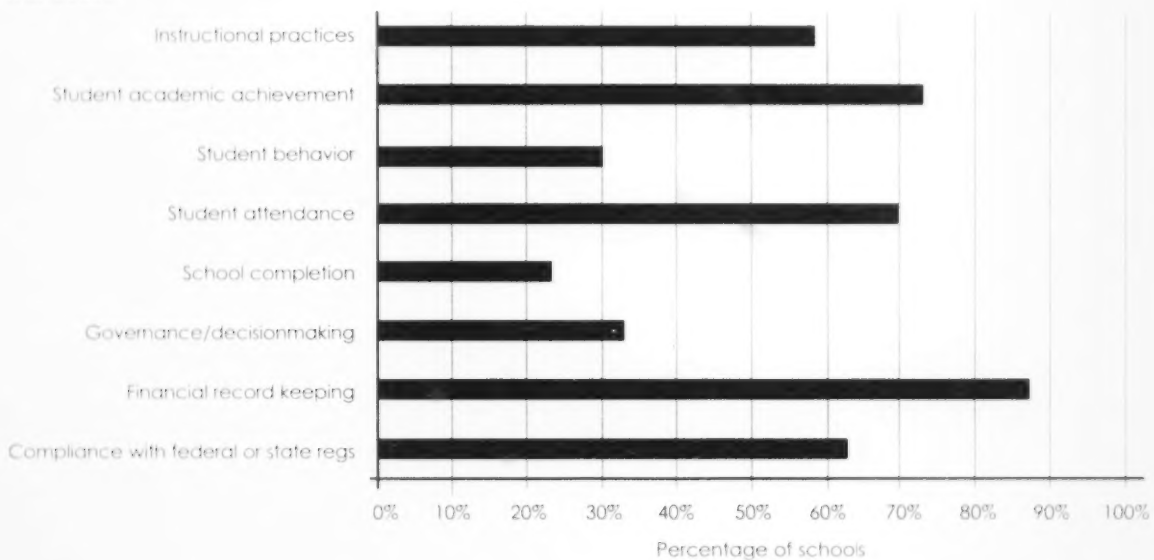
[1] The numbers in each of the "Total" rows do not add to 100% across the columns because respondents were also offered "Both" as a response.

EXTERNAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND MONITORING

Regardless of state law, charter schools enter into contracts with sponsoring entities in which freedom from regulations (except those related to health, safety and nondiscrimination) is traded for increased accountability for outcomes. However, such external accountability is effective only if charter-granting or other agencies monitor charter schools in those areas for which they are to be held accountable. State legislation as well as regulatory practices vary greatly across states in the extent to which they do monitoring—and, indeed, in the extent to which they take a regulatory approach to holding charter schools accountable.

- In 1997–98, the main areas in which charter schools (in a selected sample) said they were monitored were in school finances (87 percent), student academic achievement (73 percent), student attendance (70 percent), and compliance with state or federal regulations (63 percent).
- A lower percentage of charter schools reported that they were monitored for the school's governance or decisionmaking structure (34 percent), student behavior (30 percent), and school completion rates (24 percent).
- The pattern of monitoring across states differs greatly depending on the state's approach to accountability. For example, compared to Arizona schools, a much higher proportion of schools in Massachusetts reported they were monitored on student achievement, instructional practices, and school governance. Massachusetts follows a "centralized" state agency approach to charter school accountability, whereas Arizona takes a "market-driven" approach. States like California and Colorado have created, in law and practice, a "district-based" approach that relies on local accountability within a state framework of testing.

ESTIMATED PERCENTAGE OF CHARTER SCHOOLS THAT ARE EXTERNALLY MONITORED ON ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES



PERCENTAGE OF A SELECTED SAMPLE OF CHARTER SCHOOLS ON AREAS OF EXTERNAL MONITORING, BY STATE

	# of Schools in Sample	Instructional Practices	Student Achievement	Student Behavior	Student Attendance
Total	284	58.5%	73.1%	30.3%	69.7%
State					
Arizona	64	70.3%	65.6%	26.6%	81.3%
California	71	47.9%	74.6%	33.8%	76.1%
Colorado	30	46.7%	90.0%	33.3%	66.7%
Georgia	8	50.0%	87.5%	37.5%	75.0%
Massachusetts	15	93.3%	93.3%	26.7%	53.3%
Michigan	53	66.0%	64.2%	26.4%	56.6%
Minnesota	15	46.7%	60.0%	6.7%	53.3%
New Mexico	4	50.0%	75.0%	25.0%	75.0%
Texas	14	42.9%	71.4%	50.0%	78.6%
Wisconsin	10	50.0%	70.0%	20.0%	40.0%

	# of Schools in Sample	School Completion	School Governance	School Finances	Compliance with Regulations
Total	284	23.8%	33.7%	87.4%	62.9%
State*					
Arizona	64	29.7%	31.3%	84.4%	70.3%
California	71	25.4%	28.2%	91.5%	54.9%
Colorado	30	30.0%	23.3%	83.3%	63.3%
Georgia	8	12.5%	37.5%	75.0%	37.5%
Massachusetts	15	6.7%	80.0%	100.0%	46.7%
Michigan	53	13.2%	41.5%	86.8%	75.5%
Minnesota	15	13.3%	13.3%	93.3%	66.7%
New Mexico	4	50.0%	75.0%	75.0%	25.0%
Texas	14	28.6%	21.4%	92.9%	57.1%
Wisconsin	10	30.0%	30.0%	60.0%	50.0%

NOTE: The percentages in the table show the number of schools that reported monitoring during the year in each area divided by the total number of schools in each state. This figure reports data from 291 charter schools referred to as a selected sample in the text. This question only appeared on the 1998 follow-up survey and so only schools that responded to the 1998 follow-up survey answered this question. This omits charter schools in their first year of operation. Schools in 16 states responded to the original survey and were approached with the follow-up survey. The data for 10 schools are not presented by state because the schools are in 5 states (Alaska, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Florida, and Louisiana) that have 3 or fewer schools. The "Total" row does include data from these 10 schools.

EXTERNAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND REPORTING

In exchange for freedom from laws and regulations that apply to other public schools, charter schools have increased accountability and reporting requirements. Reporting requirements and audiences for reporting differ by state and by individual charter school. Charter schools made reports to various constituencies on the school's progress towards its goals. All of a selected sample of charter schools have made or plan to make a report to at least one interested constituency.

- In 1997–98 the majority of a selected sample of charter schools said they had made or were planning to make a report on the school's progress toward its goals to key constituent groups: their chartering agency (90 percent), parents (88 percent), or the school's governing board (92 percent).
- State departments of education represent a key reporting agency in some states. At least 75 percent of schools in Alaska, Georgia, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, and New Mexico had made or planned to make a report to their State Department of Education.
- The pattern of reporting progress toward goals shows some variation across states in reporting to key constituents, but the majority of charter schools in every state (two-thirds or more) had made or planned to make a report to their chartering agency, their parents, or their school governing board.
- The pattern of reporting progress toward goals to other constituencies varies across states. For example, in 11 states, half or more of the schools had made or planned to make a report to the community or general public, while in 4 states fewer than 50 percent planned to report to the community.

ESTIMATED PERCENTAGE OF A SELECTED SAMPLE OF SCHOOLS REPORTING PROGRESS TOWARD GOALS TO THEIR REPORTING AGENCIES

	Made a report	Planning to make a report	Not made or planning to make a report	Don't know	Not applicable
Chartering agency	55.4%	34.4%	8.5%	0.7%	1.0%
Private funders	15.3%	10.2%	35.4%	38.4%	0.7%
Parents	56.5%	31.3%	10.5%	1.7%	0.0%
Community/general public	36.1%	17.0%	41.5%	4.8%	0.7%
School governing board	65.0%	26.5%	6.8%	1.0%	0.7%
State department of education, not chartering agency	43.9%	16.7%	32.7%	5.4%	1.4%

NOTE: These data are based on responses from all 294 charter schools that responded to the 1998 follow-up survey referred to as a selected sample in the text. This question only appeared on the 1998 follow-up survey and so only schools that responded to the 1998 follow-up survey answered this question.

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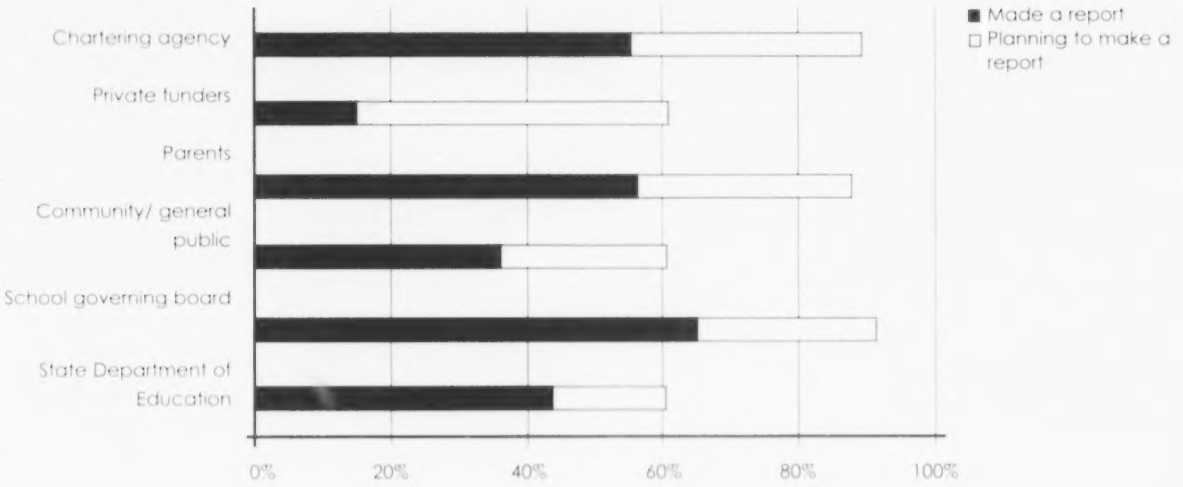
PERCENTAGE OF CHARTER SCHOOLS THAT HAVE MADE A REPORT OR ARE PLANNING TO MAKE A REPORT, BY REPORTING AGENCY



PERCENTAGE OF A SELECTED SAMPLE OF CHARTER SCHOOLS[1] THAT HAVE REPORTED OR PLAN TO REPORT, BY STATE

	Reporting Agency						
	Chartering Agency	Private Funders	Parents	Community/ General Public	School governing board	State DOE	Number of Schools
	Percentage of Schools						
Total	89.8%	25.5%	87.8%	53.1%	91.5%	60.6%	294
Arizona	92.2%	23.5%	90.6%	50.1%	90.7%	59.4%	64
California	85.9%	14.1%	84.5%	43.7%	92.9%	24.0%	71
Colorado	100.0%	40.0%	83.4%	60.0%	93.3%	66.7%	30
Georgia	87.5%	12.5%	100.0%	75.0%	87.5%	87.5%	8
Massachusetts	93.3%	60.0%	93.4%	80.0%	100.0%	93.3%	15
Michigan	88.7%	16.9%	92.4%	58.5%	92.5%	79.3%	53
Minnesota	100.0%	26.7%	80.0%	53.4%	86.7%	93.4%	15
New Mexico	100.0%	25.0%	100.0%	75%	75.0%	75.0%	4
Texas	78.5%	57.2%	78.6%	50.0%	100.0%	71.4%	14
Wisconsin	70.0%	30.0%	90.0%	50.0%	70.0%	50.0%	10

[1] The percentages in the table show the number of schools that reported or plan to report progress in each area divided by the total number of schools in each state. The data for 10 schools are not presented by state because the schools are in 5 states (Alaska, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Florida, and Louisiana) that have 3 or fewer schools. The "Total" row does include data from these 10 schools.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND STUDENT ASSESSMENT

Charter schools are held accountable for the achievement of their students. Some charter legislation speaks specifically to improving student achievement as a goal for charter schools. Charter schools report using a number of measures of student achievement, some of them are traditional standardized assessment methods and others more innovative methods like portfolios and student demonstrations.

- Most charter schools report that they use standardized assessments of student achievement (86 percent) and 75 percent of charter schools use the tests that are part of the state's assessment program. Standardized tests and the state's assessment test are the most typical method of reporting for accountability purposes.
- Charter schools also report using a number of other assessment methods. Most charter schools (85 percent) report using student demonstrations of their work as a way of measuring student achievement. Most schools also report using student portfolios (79 percent) and performance assessments (70 percent) to measure student progress.
- Many charter schools also report using parent surveys (81 percent), behavioral indicators (75 percent), and student surveys (70 percent).
- Assessment methods are generally consistent across newly created and pre-existing public schools. Pre-existing private schools are slightly less likely to use performance assessments, student portfolios, parent surveys, and behavioral indicators. Pre-existing public schools are slightly more likely to use student surveys and behavioral indicator.

ESTIMATED PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOLS USING VARIOUS TYPES OF ASSESSMENT METHODS

		Charter school creation status		
Type of assessment	Percentage of schools	Newly created	Pre-existing public	Pre-existing private
Standardized assessments	86.4%	87.6%	84.2%	83.1%
State assessment program	74.8%	77.1%	70.0%	69.2%
Performance assessments	69.6%	70.3%	70.8%	63.1%
Student portfolios	78.8%	81.5%	78.3%	63.1%
Student demonstrations of their work	85.0%	85.7%	81.7%	87.7%
Parent satisfaction surveys	80.6%	82.2%	79.1%	73.8%
Student interviews or surveys	70.4%	69.1%	79.2%	64.6%
Behavioral indicators	75.1%	73.7%	85.0%	67.7%

NOTE: This exhibit draws on either 580 or 618 out of a possible 619 open charter schools that responded to the telephone survey. Three of the methods of assessments (standardized assessments, locally developed performance assessments, national or state performance assessments) were items only asked about on the new schools surveys. For these 3 items, the total number of valid charter schools is 580, with results reflecting responses from the year of administration of the new school survey. The remaining items have been asked consistently on both the new and follow-up surveys and the results reflect the most recent school responses.

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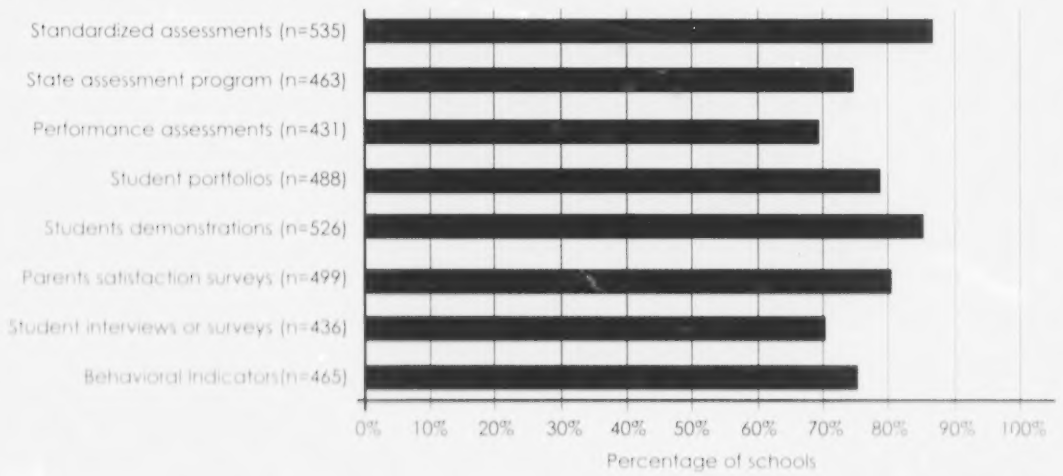
PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOLS THAT USE VARIOUS METHODS OF ASSESSMENT



ACROSS-STATE COMPARISON OF ESTIMATED PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOLS USING VARIOUS TYPES OF ASSESSMENTS

States (with 5 or more schools)	Standardized assessments	State assessment program	Performance assessments	Student portfolios	Student demonstrations of their work	Parent satisfaction surveys	Student interviews or surveys	Behavioral indicators
Total percentage	86.4%	74.8%	69.6%	79.0%	85.1%	80.6%	70.6%	75.2%
Alaska (12)	100.0%	66.7%	58.3%	66.7%	75.0%	83.3%	75.0%	50.0%
Arizona (127)	92.1%	70.9%	71.7%	81.1%	86.6%	68.5%	66.1%	69.3%
California (119)	86.7%	60.5%	74.2%	88.2%	82.4%	84.9%	75.6%	69.7%
Colorado (49)	87.8%	87.8%	79.6%	67.3%	75.5%	87.8%	55.1%	83.7%
Connecticut (11)	100.0%	100.0%	63.6%	90.9%	81.8%	81.8%	100.0%	81.8%
Florida (31)	93.5%	77.4%	74.2%	90.3%	83.9%	77.4%	74.2%	77.4%
Georgia (18)	100.0%	66.7%	61.1%	72.2%	94.4%	77.8%	66.7%	77.8%
Illinois (6)	100.0%	83.3%	83.3%	50.0%	100.0%	33.3%	33.3%	66.7%
Louisiana (6)	100.0%	50.0%	66.7%	66.7%	83.3%	66.7%	33.3%	50.0%
Massachusetts (21)	85.7%	90.5%	76.2%	95.2%	76.2%	95.2%	76.2%	85.7%
Michigan (95)	77.9%	75.8%	61.1%	68.4%	91.6%	88.4%	73.7%	74.7%
Minnesota (25)	80.0%	84.0%	60.0%	84.0%	80.0%	96.0%	92.0%	88.0%
North Carolina (27)	88.9%	88.9	63.0%	81.5%	88.9%	81.5%	63.0%	77.8%
New Jersey (6)	100.0%	66.7%	50.0%	100.0%	100.0%	50.0%	33.3%	83.3%
Texas (29)	72.4%	93.1%	65.5%	69.0%	86.2%	79.3%	69.0%	89.7%
Wisconsin (17)	52.9%	88.2%	88.2%	70.6%	94.1%	76.5%	70.6%	82.4%

APPENDIX: RESPONSE RATE BY STATE

Column 2 in the table below shows the total number of survey responses on any one of the five administered surveys by state. The total number of charter schools in column 3 reflects the number of charter schools open at the time of the 1998 survey administrations.

State	Survey Responses	Total Charter Schools	Percent Response
Alaska	12	15	80%
Arizona	127	135	94%
California	120	129	93%
Colorado	49	50	98%
Connecticut	11	12	92%
Delaware	3	3	100%
District of Columbia	3	3	100%
Florida	31	34	91%
Georgia	18	21	86%
Hawaii	2	2	100%
Illinois	6	8	75%
Kansas	1	1	100%
Louisiana	6	6	100%
Massachusetts	21	24	88%
Michigan	95	109	87%
Minnesota	25	27	93%
North Carolina	27	34	79%
New Jersey	6	13	46%
New Mexico	4	5	80%
Pennsylvania	4	6	67%
Rhode Island	1	1	100%
South Carolina	1	2	50%
Texas	29	41	71%
Wisconsin	17	17	100%

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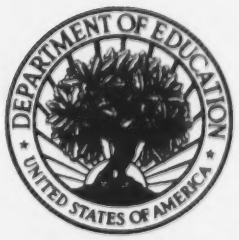

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